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THE DECKER MINE PROPOSALS:
Social and Social Services Analyses

(Complete Study - ~~un~~ edited)

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for
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Introduction

The present report of social impact of the proposed expansion of the Decker Coal Company mine is one of a series of studies comprising the official environmental impact assessment of this proposed expansion. Sponsored by the Department of State Lands,* which administers strip mining activities in Montana, our research was designed to provide an objective and impartial view of the area where social structure, way of life, and community services are likely to be impacted by expansion of mining operations at Decker, Montana. Our assignment was to generate data which describes the area's social and cultural makeup, indicates how this makeup is likely to be affected by Decker's proposed expansion, and suggests what might be done to mitigate these effects. Although we and people who live in the area were aware of announced and rumored coal developments in the area's vicinity, our assignment limited our inquiry to the social impact of Decker's proposed expansion.** This research limitation made it difficult for us to ask, and for our respondents to answer, questions pertaining to thinking about, planning for, and mitigating Decker's social impact because we all knew of other imminent coal developments in Sheridan, Johnson, and Big Horn counties and felt that it was virtually impossible to act as if

*Other studies in this series were sponsored by this state agency and the U.S. Geological Survey.

**See the bibliography at the end of this report for references to other reports containing additional information on social structure and life-styles in the vicinity of Sheridan. For additional technical data on public services in Sheridan, see the VTN report mentioned in the bibliography and appropriate studies which appear elsewhere in the larger report which contains the present one.



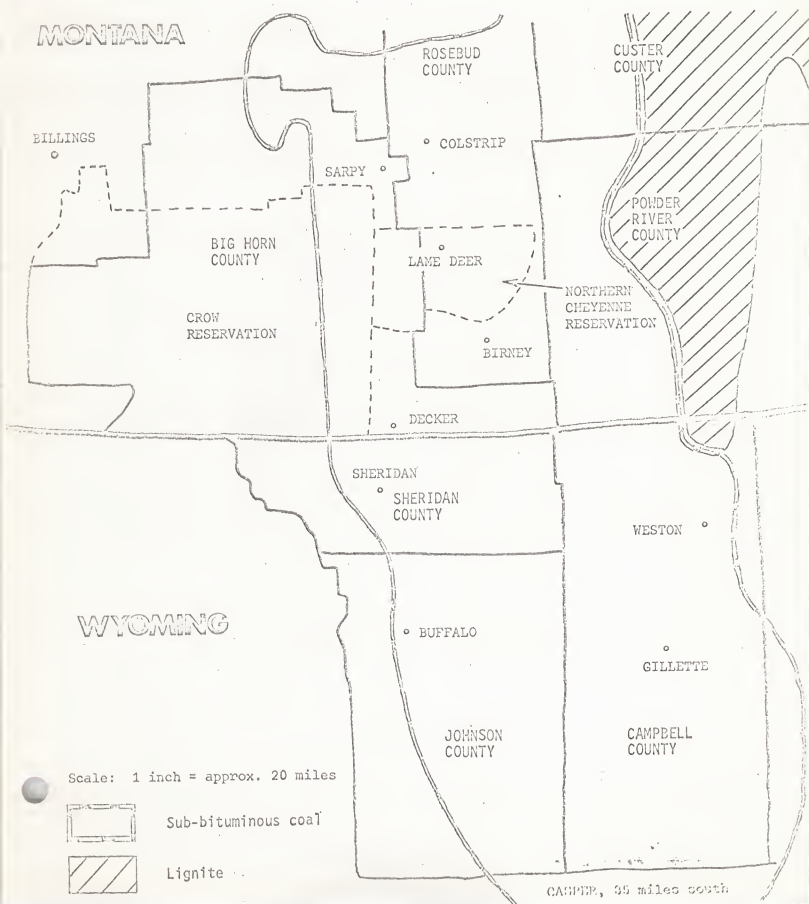
these non-Decker social impacts on the study area could be taken completely out of account. Nevertheless, we all tried--and did the best we could to focus on Decker alone.

The study area consisted principally of the city of Sheridan, Wyoming (see figure 1). We concentrated research efforts on Sheridan because most Decker employees lived there and will probably continue doing so; as a result, the impact of the mine expansion on Sheridan's community services will be far greater than on those of any other community.

Since we had only three months and a limited budget to do the research, we and the sponsor's representative, Dr. John Fitzpatrick (a staff sociologist at Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation who was made available to coordinate and monitor socioeconomic research on Decker's expansion impact), decided that our efforts should concentrate on Sheridan and allow for some coverage of its vicinity. We chose probability (or random) sampling as the best method of adequately representing Sheridan's several thousand residents in our social survey (see Appendix SI-1 for a description of sampling procedure). To standardize and quantify information most readily, our three-person research team developed a questionnaire and administered it in face-to-face contacts with the randomly selected respondents. This procedure worked very well; the people we asked to give us information were most cooperative and helpful. In addition, we arranged personal interviews with various agency personnel, politicians, businessmen, and other informed people in and around Sheridan to obtain in-depth data on various dimensions of social impact (e.g., what it means to people and how it works) which can only be touched on in a questionnaire survey.



Figure 1: Study Area and Vicinity





The decision to concentrate social research on Sheridan contained another implication which should be mentioned. The research entailed asking people in a Wyoming community about costly community impacts caused by a business development in Montana. We asked about a situation which would give an economic benefit at very little social cost to Montana and require Wyoming, and especially Sheridan, to pay economic and social costs for comparatively little benefits. Two areas in Montana are faced with comparable coal development situations, one involving British Columbia, the other North Dakota. Because the position of these two areas (and others) may well turn out to be like Sheridan's, the way in which Montana and Wyoming work out the present imbalance between social costs and economic benefits may set a precedent for when Montana communities are socially impacted by coal developments across the borders it shares with other states or provinces.

The report which follows consists of three principal sections and appendixes. The first section tells about life in the study area at present and in the recent past, the second about what its residents expect would be the social impacts of Decker's proposed mine expansion, and the third about what life would be like if the expected social impacts are mitigated. The appendixes contain a copy of the questionnaire used in our social survey of Sheridan, a tabulation of responses to the questionnaire, a description of the procedure used to sample the area, maps of the rural area around Decker, and a bibliography of references cited in our report.



CHAPTER II
DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT



Description of Social Environment

Introduction

Located at the base of the Big Horn Mountains, Sheridan is a very attractive place with many trees, large old houses, clean and well-kept streets, and a tradition of low cost housing and rent. It is a traditional, conservative town that is sometimes described by its residents as WASPish, class conscious, and cliquish.

Sheridan is a favorite retirement town for many of the rural people in the area. More than a quarter of its residents are age 60 and over, and nearly all of these older people are retired. The great majority of the retired people in Sheridan own their homes and live in middle-class sections of town.

Until recently the population of Sheridan had remained almost the same since the 1920s although the population of Sheridan County had dropped since then. In the 1910s and 20s there was large-scale underground mining of coal in Sheridan County and there were several small mining towns associated with the mines, each with a population of three or four thousand. At various times Sheridan has had a sugar beet plant, a flour mill, and a brewery; all of these have gradually disappeared.

Our survey revealed that Sheridan's population (10,856 in 1970) is now around 13,000. The county assessor's figures indicate that the county's population has increased by 4,200 since 1970.* Apparently, about half of this increase has occurred in the city of Sheridan.

*In comparing this figure with the much lower 1974 census estimate used in the population section of this report, it should be noted that this figure is supported by other ongoing estimates of population change made by



The population increase appears to have been caused principally by people who have been attracted to Sheridan by actual or hoped-for jobs in the coal industry. In fact, the latter influx became so much a concern that last autumn the local employment office publicized a "Don't come!" message to all who were inclined to come to Sheridan in hopes of finding a job. The message has apparently not stopped such influx. The bulk of Sheridan's population increase therefore consists of younger people. Many of these younger people are taking any job they can find in order to be around in the event that coal industry (especially Decker and Texaco) jobs open up sometime soon. Others stay for a short time and move on. There appears to be little other outmigration at present. Population losses tend to be due to deaths of older people.

Over 80 percent of Sheridan's residents live in permanent single family houses. About 12 percent live in apartments, 4 percent in mobile homes. In addition to the approximately 200 mobile homes in Sheridan, more than 100 are located within a few miles of town. Mobile homes are not new to Sheridan, but they have been much more in evidence in the past few years. There has been little home or apartment construction since World War II, an important factor in accounting for both the general housing shortage and the addition of mobile homes.

For a long time a convenient stopping place for travelers, Sheridan has recently been attracting increasing numbers of itinerant job seekers.

such knowledgeable locals as employment and health agency personnel. Our own estimate of the present population in the city of Sheridan is also consistent with this figure.



Besides the new job seekers who (along with more established locals) wish to be on hand when Decker starts hiring workers for its expanded operations, recent immigrants include some who are employed at Gillette and others who work for Texaco in Johnson County.

Fully two-thirds of Sheridan's residents have been there much or all of their lives. Approximately 6 percent of its adults have resided there for less than one year, 11 percent for less than three years, and 21 percent for less than five years.

Sheridan is a regional shopping center, serving many rural people in northeastern Wyoming and southeastern Montana. The occupations of heads of households are what one would expect in a shopping and general service center of a sparsely populated area. About three out of every ten heads of households are in the professional/managerial/supervisory category and four out of ten in blue collar and white collar occupations.

Residents of Sheridan are oriented much more toward Billings than toward Casper or Cheyenne. When it comes to seeking better, more varied, or more specialized shopping facilities, health services, and the like, they usually go to Billings.

Mining was a traditional activity in the Sheridan area for many years. In the past few years, strip mining has come into prominence and has now definitely superseded the traditional deep mining.

In the order of their appearance, the principal topics covered in the remainder of this part of the report are Quality of Life, The People, Housing, Water and Sewage, Transportation, Schools, Recreation, Public Safety, Social Services, and Health Services.



Quality of Life and Social Values

Many of the people we interviewed described themselves as WASPs and the atmosphere of Sheridan as WASPish. When they talked this way, they were neither bragging nor complaining; rather, they were being matter-of-fact. The town appears to be decidedly middle class even to the casual observer. Closer inspection reveals that it is a product of the coming together of old family Westerners and outsiders ("Easterners") who have become converts to a Western lifestyle. As a place where, in this sense, East meets West in a cultural melting pot seemingly designed to perpetuate the status quo, Sheridan is what our informants called "cliquey," "conservative," "cold," and yet "hospitable." The middle-class majority have deep ties to the land, either having spent much of their lives on ranches or farms or having relatives who are landowners. As such, the middle class are indeed conservative and inclined to resist change. Yet, the businessmen among them view future community growth (i.e., change) as good for business--at least to the point where chain store competition might come in and threaten their survival. While certainly good for business, recent change has brought with it some social elements (e.g., people who create law enforcement problems, undesirable neighbors, and the like) that give Sheridanites an unpleasant taste of what future social impacts might produce. The very rich--and Sheridan reportedly has some exceptionally wealthy people--simply do not want the town to change. They were in the ordinary case attracted there because of the beauty of the surrounding area and its isolation from urban-industrial forces, and are not interested in the money which coal development might bring to the community. The very poor and the working classes tend to welcome change, feeling that they need new money too much to worry about social impact.



Sheridan's retired people, about a fourth of its total population, tend to be middle class in attitude and behavior and to share the mixed feelings of other middle-class residents about future growth. Thus far the elderly have not been particularly affected by community change, mainly because property taxes are still low (about a third of what Missoulians pay, for example) and their contacts with new people have been minimal.* Having more retired people per capita than any other city in Wyoming, it might be expected that Sheridan's voters would not be disposed to support increases in taxes to fund development of community services. Well, the fact is that the elderly have not been inclined to vote, although they are potentially the most powerful voting bloc in town. It will be interesting to watch their voting behavior as service-improving taxes are proposed. Meanwhile, the population of retired people has stopped growing in Sheridan because rapidly rising housing costs and the housing shortage have been discouraging people who had planned to retire there from doing so.

For all people in Sheridan, the meaning of rapidly increasing housing costs has been determined to some extent by how the increase has been affecting them. As one respondent said, "It depends on whether you look at the housing market from the standpoint of a buyer or a seller, a renter or a landlord." Even so, many respondents who stand to gain personally from the increase feel that it is not good for the community and wish it would cease.

While the local economic situation is generally thought good, some aspects of it are problematic. Area ranchers and Sheridan businessmen find

*See table SI-1 concerning how Sheridanites compare their property taxes with those of other communities. One thing this comparison suggests is that Sheridanites of all description do not yet realize that their property taxes are actually lower than those in comparable communities in the region and, in a rapid population increase situation, have high growth potential.



Table SI-1

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Opinion of Property Taxes in Comparable Communities

Do you think that property taxes in Sheridan are _____ taxes in <u>comparable communities?</u>	<u>Years of Residence in Sheridan County</u>					<u>Total</u>
	<u>under 1 year</u>	<u>more than 1, less than 3 years</u>	<u>3 but less than 5 years</u>	<u>5-10 years</u>	<u>much or all of life</u>	
Higher than	0.8	1.7	1.7	0.0	4.2	8.3
The same as	0.0	1.7	2.5	2.5	18.3	25.0
Lower than	1.7	0.0	0.8	3.3	10.8	16.7
Don't know	3.3	1.7	5.0	5.8	34.2	50.0
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0



themselves unable to compete with the eight-dollar-and-up wages paid by Decker. Given the rising occupational expectations and hopes which go with industrial expansion, it is understandable that, although jobs are usually available for adults, the better paying jobs seem to elude many job seekers. Jobs for youth were reported to be much less plentiful than those for adults.

It is widely believed in Sheridan that Decker tends to bring in outsiders for its better paying jobs, leaving the less attractive ones for the locals. However, many Sheridanites believe that most of the hiring at Decker has thus far been done locally.

About 40 percent of the newcomers (i.e., people who have been in Sheridan for less than one year) in Sheridan work for Decker, a factor in why the older residents usually are aware of Decker workers and their effects on the community. The nature of this awareness is open to question because 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they know little or nothing about plans to expand the Decker mine. It is well to note that, ordinarily, the community's awareness of Decker employees is positive. The general belief is that Decker has been economically beneficial to Sheridan and has caused little social disruption--except for attracting a lot of job seekers for whom there are no jobs. The only criticism we heard concerning Decker's effects on the economic picture is the belief, expressed by a wide range of informants, that people with high wages tend to drive up prices and therefore make it harder for the retired and other low- and fixed-income people to get along. With reference to "the coal industry" and not to Decker alone, several informants expressed apprehension that some control over local political decision-making processes is already being exercised by industry through its ability to influence the votes of workers.

Some informants said that the rich control Sheridan although this is not obvious unless you know what is going on. "The rich" are usually the professionals and the bankers. These informants believed that this group wants development and is aggressively pushing for it. Early this year the Chamber of Commerce made a lobbying effort in Cheyenne to try to convince the legislators not to be so hard on industry as to drive them out. Observing this, these informants declared that the Chamber in its actions was not representing all the businessmen but only the rich decision makers, including local coal company officials. Apropos of this declaration, we should like to add one of our own. While preparing to do the questionnaire study in Sheridan this summer, we were part of an incident (which involved the calculated and deliberate mishandling of a confidential document) which revealed that the Chamber is no longer oriented primarily to small businessmen. The incident showed that the Chamber is quite capable of acting like a handmaiden of the Decker Coal Company.

There was much resentment among the several Decker and railroad workers we interviewed concerning having to pay Montana state income tax "for nothing." To them, the situation is a case of taxation without representation. On top of this they are not even getting public services for their money. Not surprisingly, therefore, about three quarters of the respondents thought that Montana should help pay part of Sheridan's public service bill.

We found general belief that the city's streets are gradually being improved, but that much paving of dirt roads must still be done. This is one area where the city government was thought to be getting on top of things. Otherwise there was widespread dissatisfaction: only 42 percent of the people said that they are satisfied with city government.



The People

The employed. More than 23 percent of the respondents in the survey were retired, and 4 percent were not employed for other reasons; 31 percent were employed as professionals, managers, or supervisors; 41 percent were blue collar (including craftsmen and technicians) and clerical workers; and one percent (one respondent) was a rancher.

People in Sheridan were about evenly divided in their response to "from your standpoint, job opportunities are good" at the present time; 37 percent agreed, 47 percent disagreed, 13 percent were retired, and 3 percent responded "don't know." Many said that adults could get jobs if they want to but that there are few opportunities for young people. In the past Sheridan has had a large number of low-income people, many of whom work at low paying clerical and menial jobs. Businesses have had cheap labor and a captive market, but in the last year or so that kind of help was becoming harder to find as unemployment rates began to drop. More recently people coming in looking for coal development jobs that do not yet exist have increased the unemployment rate and added to the minimum wage labor pool.

Many people believe that Decker hires most of their help from outside the Decker area. Comments were made by several questionnaire respondents that "better jobs go to outsiders," "Decker, Texaco, and BN are notorious for bringing in people for the job; there are not that many locals hired." The local employment office seems to get little call from the Decker mine, although an employment officer said that Sheridan could provide most of the required work force if there were housing. Reports of full page ads in Chicago papers offering employment with the company add to the belief that the Decker mine hires a lot of "outsiders." Of the sample of Decker



employees in the Sheridan survey, 30 percent had lived in the county for less than a year and 40 percent for much or all of their lives. Had outlying trailer courts been sampled, the number of Decker-employed newcomers may have been higher.

To the statement, "Everything considered, I believe that approval should be granted to expand the Decker Mine," 55 percent of the blue collar and clerical workers responded "yes," and more than 32 percent said "I need to know more about the expansion plans and likely consequences." This compares with 52 percent of the total sample who responded "yes" and 35 percent who said "I need to know more . . ." Forty-six percent of the professionals voted "yes," and 32 percent said "I need to know more . . ." Somewhat surprisingly, 57 percent of those who are retired voted "yes" and 32 percent said "I need to know more . . ."

The elderly. Why do retired persons in Sheridan approve of increasing coal development even more than those who might expect to find better jobs as a result of industry's expansion? A most popular answer is the old cliché, "You can't stop progress." Traditionally old-time residents identify with business. Even those who are retired ranchers tend to look upon ranching more as a business than as a way of life.

The older respondents also spoke of the need to "broaden the tax base," feeling that all of Sheridan's problems could be solved if there were more money for services without increasing their own taxes.

There are some interesting discrepancies in their responses. For example, those listing no employer (85 percent of whom are retired) were equally divided between agreement and disagreement with the statement that Sheridan can handle the increased population projected for expansion of the mine. The same group



was equally divided in choosing between "economically beneficial" and "increased rents and living costs" as the principal effect of the Decker Coal Company on Sheridan. Yet 57 percent of the smaller group representing only the retired voted "yes" to mine expansion.

Ranchers in Montana. Most ranchers believed that there were very few in this area that could not make it without lease money, even with the depressed cattle prices. They said they have made it before through several years of low prices. They were also used to the ups and downs of the market, some saying you have to expect five bad years for every three good years, and a good manager recognizes this and does not overextend himself in the good years because he can always expect bad ones to follow. Some pointed out, however, that the difference between prices the past two years has never been so great and that generally when cattle prices are down so is the price of grain and some of the other expenses. That has not been true recently.

Oil leasing has been going on in some areas for as long as twenty years, and most ranchers throughout this area have done at least some oil leasing. There has been exploration, with the peak of the activity in the Otter-Sayle-Decker area about four years ago. Ranchers have considered the oil lease money as "gravy" with little or no consequences. Some informants believe that those who leased their land early for coal also believed that this money would be such gravy and that the companies would let the options run out. One Forest Service informant said the biggest observable effect of leasing so far is all the new pickups and things the lease money is buying.

The ones who generally expressed doubt that most ranchers can make it without some outside source of income were in this category themselves. For



them, coal leasing is one means of remaining in the ranching business. Even some of those opposed to coal development said there are few making it solely on ranching. Of course most ranchers do operate from year to year on short-term operating loans. Informants said that one thing ranchers most despise is owing anyone money, and perhaps the money guaranteed each year from coal leases is a means of making the rancher feel more independent.

Some owners of old-time ranches may be heavily mortgaged because they bought out the other heirs or because they have expanded, sometimes trying to put a ranch back together that had been divided among many heirs.

Several people have mentioned good management as the key to successful ranching no matter what the size or situation of the operation is. They have pointed out ranchers that should have everything going for them but are barely making it simply because they are poor managers. One informant said he has to spend one or two full days a week working on his books just to know where he is at, to determine whether he is making a profit or is going to have to borrow. He said most ranchers do not do that. They just go along from month to month trying to keep their costs and expenses in their heads, but when it comes to the end of the year they are not sure whether they have made money or lost. Other informants have said that those who say they have to lease in order to keep their operation together are using that as a crutch for their poor management. They said the ranches that are in existence now are all of good enough size so that if they were run properly they would all make money.

Community relations are not as strong in the Decker and Kirby areas as in some other southeastern Montana ranching communities. More of the



families are new (have come in the last 25 years), which means that some of the land changes hands quite often. In the Decker area, many ranch headquarters were wiped out in 1936 with construction of the Tongue River Reservoir. This caused many of the old established families to leave. Another reason given for the lack of community feeling was the size of ranches and therefore the distance between people. This has come about with the consolidation of ranches. With more and more dependence on Sheridan and improved access to it the people have been depending less and less on each other.**

Miners. Most of the respondents to the survey who were miners worked at Decker. Thirty percent of them had lived in Sheridan less than one year; 20 percent had been a resident for five to ten years and 40 percent much or all of their lives. Most of them owned their own homes although more lived in mobile home courts (10 percent) than the total survey population (four).* Forty percent of the miners reported that they were quite familiar with Decker's expansion plans compared to 11 percent in the total survey. More of them (20 percent) felt that local business gains and present taxes were sufficient to pay service costs related to Decker workers; only 11 percent of all those surveyed agreed with that choice. However, the rest of the miners surveyed were equally divided in how such costs should be paid; 40 percent chose "states of Montana and Wyoming should help . . ." and 40 percent chose "coal industry and the two states should help . . ."

Other Sheridan residents. Most of the survey respondents who worked at clerical jobs had lived in Sheridan much or all of their lives; 40 percent

*A large mobile home park a few miles outside the city was not surveyed.

**The rural area around Decker is depicted in the maps in Appendix SI-4.



of them worked for government, a number of these at the VA hospital. Professionals, managers, and supervisors had more often moved to Sheridan in the past ten years, and more than one-third of them were self-employed.

Housing

Rosebud County, Montana. There is almost no housing available in Rosebud County south of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. This southern section is the only part of Rosebud County that might be affected by the Decker mine. A few landowners have allowed one mobile home on their property, but there are no mobile home parks or housing developments in this area and no small towns that provide housing for the miners.

Big Horn County, Montana. The southern section of Big Horn County is much like the southern part of Rosebud County. There are essentially no housing, shopping, or community services. There have been no announced plans to build either mobile home parks or housing developments in Big Horn County. The county will not be able to provide significant housing for newcomers.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. Most of the employees at the Decker mine live in or near Sheridan. Few residents of Sheridan seem to expect great changes very soon. The impact of accelerated coal-related development is a "maybe" for which they think there will be time to plan and otherwise prepare. "It is hard for us to grasp the likelihood of great change here,"* one said; but one great change that almost everyone was acutely aware of was in housing. The city of Sheridan has experienced a sharp increase in demand for housing over the past three years. Increasing costs and declining

*Quotations from interviews may be paraphrased throughout this report.



adequacy and availability of housing to rent or buy were apparent to most of the residents that were surveyed and interviewed. More than 80 percent of those in the study area disagreed with the statement that good housing is available in Sheridan (see table SI-2). More than 70 percent said that rents are higher than two years ago, most of these reporting "much higher." From a list of seven items describing the most significant factors in community change in the past three years, 55 percent chose "housing costs." A social service official reported that not only is it difficult to find adequate housing but even inadequate units are unavailable. His low-income clients have been virtually priced out of the market for even marginal housing for which workers with higher incomes are willing to pay extraordinarily high rents. One of his co-workers who has lived in the area most of her life has, after months of effort, been unable to find a suitable "middle-class" rental.

Most residents estimated that an average two-bedroom, unfurnished apartment now rents for \$125 per month, not including utilities. The median of actual rents paid by 32 respondents was also \$125 per month, indicating that rent costs have increased about 55 percent during the past five years (the 1970 census reports the median rent was \$80 per month). Homeowners reported being offered as much as double what they paid for their property a few years ago.

What caused this drastic change in Sheridan's housing situation? Some of the increased cost is a result of nationwide inflation, but it is obvious that there has also been increasing demand for housing in Sheridan and no comparable building. Except for a few apartments, most housing construction has been single residences costing around \$50,000. The population increase



Table SI-2

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Agreement on Available Good Housing and Average Rent

Indicate whether you agree, disagree, or are neutral about available good housing in Sheridan.	Years of Residence in Sheridan County					Total
	under 1 year	more than 1, less than 3 years	3 but less than 5 years	5-10 years	much or all of life	
Agree	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	4.2	7.5
Disagree	3.3	4.2	8.3	9.2	58.3	83.3
Neutral	1.7	0.0	0.8	0.8	4.2	7.5
Declined to respond/don't know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	1.6
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0

In Sheridan the average rent for an
unfurnished, one-bedroom apartment
without utilities is:

About \$100 per month	0.0	0.0	2.5	4.2	12.5	19.2
About \$125 per month	3.3	2.5	3.3	2.5	18.3	30.0
About \$150 per month	0.8	2.5	2.5	3.3	15.0	24.2
About \$175 per month or over	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	9.2	10.0
Don't know	1.7	0.0	0.8	1.7	12.5	16.7
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0



was attributed to a combination of events: (1) a national trend to "escape" to small towns, (2) job seekers responding to publicity about coal-related development around Sheridan, (3) workers from coal-related developments such as those at Gillette settling their families in Sheridan where living conditions are more desirable, and (4) present activity at the Decker mine. Almost 70 percent of the residents of Sheridan believed that the arrival of Decker coal miners and related workers increased the cost of housing more than it would have increased as part of a national trend. Responding to "What has been the principal effect of the Decker Coal Company on Sheridan?," the greatest number (37 percent) chose "increased rents and living costs." A close second choice (34 percent) was "economically beneficial."

Most residents of Sheridan own their single family homes. Among these are many older people who expressed a wish to sell their property because it is hard for them to maintain. They would sell now, while they can get a good price, if only there were available apartments or mobile home parks especially designed for older residents. One such retirement facility has been in the planning stage for four years and is still at least a year from completion. All of the proposed units are already rented to the project's investors.

The Sheridan County planner is conducting a housing survey to gather information on occupied housing units and to determine the number of units which are unoccupied and available. The survey is over half completed and only eight units available for rent have been found. When the survey is finished, probably in October, more complete information will be available.

Using the preliminary data from the county planner and interviews with realtors, it is reasonable to state that there are fewer than 30 housing



units available in Sheridan, excluding mobile homes. Not all of these units would be acceptable to miners or construction workers, particularly those with families.

Although newcomers to Sheridan do have the option of purchasing a mobile home, the existing mobile home parks in and around Sheridan have almost no vacancies. There is presently a moratorium on installation of new mobile homes within the city of Sheridan. Two new mobile home parks are under construction with a combined capacity of 125 units. The county and city restrictions on mobile home courts are stringent regarding water, utility hookups, and pavements. Development of mobile home parks can be expected to continue to be slow.

The cost of housing was reported by almost all questionnaire respondents and other interviewees to have risen sharply in the last three years. This reported increase was difficult to document. The county planner's housing survey should provide better information on housing costs.

Water and Sewage

Rosebud County, Montana. Forsyth's municipal water system is now at the limit of its capacity. Because of its age, the plant must be fully overhauled, modernized, and increased in capacity. The present 330,000 gallon reservoir is inadequate for a peak day's use and fire flow requirements. The two-cell lagoon sewage treatment system needs repair and enlargement to meet EPA standards. Western Energy Company is presently working to enlarge the water and sewage system in Colstrip.

Big Horn County, Montana. Hardin's water system is at its capacity and needs expansion. Plans are under way to supplement the existing system. The two-cell lagoon sewage system is also operating at capacity. The solid

waste disposal is adequately handled with a landfill dump. The smaller towns in the county all have older water and sewage systems.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. The city of Sheridan has adequate water rights, five million gallons per day. This water volume is supplemented by storage capacity of 590 million gallons. The average demand is 4.2 million gallons per day. The peak demand was six million gallons in one day. The distribution system is divided between the north reservoir and south reservoir. This division aggravates distribution problems which result in minimally adequate service. Some reduction of water pressure has been noted in the north zone. A study is presently being conducted to determine changes needed in the distribution system. This work will be completed in January 1976.

Sheridan presently has sewage treatment capacity of 2.1 million gallons per day. Applying the standards used by the Wyoming State Engineer's office of 168 gallons per day per person, the present system is adequate for approximately 12,500 people. Given present estimated population of 13,000 in Sheridan, the treatment capacity is inadequate. The limiting factor in the system is the sewage collection system, which is presently overloaded in some sectors. The director of utilities is currently studying the demand on the collection system. When this report is completed in October 1975, data on collection system overloading will become available. In 1976 the city of Sheridan plans to request funds from the EPA for expansion of the water and waste treatment and collection systems. The city administrators hope that the EPA will fully fund the additions.

Transportation

Rosebud County, Montana. Amtrak train service (three trains weekly east and west) and daily Greyhound east-west bus service provide Forsyth with adequate surface transportation. A commuter bus provides daily service between Forsyth and Colstrip. Major air service is provided at the Billings airport. Expansion is being planned at the Forsyth airport; when the work is completed, the runway will be capable of handling small jet aircraft.

State route 315 from Colstrip to I-94 needs to be rebuilt. This route handles all road traffic into and out of Colstrip.

Big Horn County, Montana. Hardin is served by a daily Trailways bus running between Sheridan and Billings. Billings serves as a transportation center for Big Horn County. In general, the county roads need improvement. However, the state route from Decker to highway I-90 in Wyoming is in fairly good condition. The State Highway Department is presently conducting a survey of highway needs in the Decker area. This survey will provide information on the adequacy of highways in the area.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. One airline provides daily north and south flights through Sheridan from Denver and Billings. Two private companies provide charter flights and air ambulance service. Complete daily bus service is available. Many county roads and city streets need improvement. Maintenance in the past has been adequate. Increases in traffic necessitate increased attention to road conditions. If the Decker mine expansion is approved, commuter bus service between Sheridan and Decker would alleviate traffic congestion.



Within Sheridan there is one cab company in operation. It is generally felt that a more available and less expensive cab company would be a very welcome addition to the community.

Schools

Rosebud County, Montana. The eight elementary and three high schools in Rosebud County are in reasonably good condition. The schools in Colstrip have experienced serious crowding. Four modular classrooms are in use to alleviate some of the crowding, and a bond issue for expansion will be proposed to the voters in October. The small schools in the county lack diversity in their curriculum and in their audio-visual material and equipment. The Forsyth high school is expanding its vo-tech program. With the exception of Colstrip, the county has adequate schools.

Big Horn County, Montana. Big Horn County has a complicated assortment of school districts serving communities on the Crow Reservation and the rest of the county. Consolidation of the districts could prove beneficial for the quality of the schools. Although the unification of schools would cause transportation problems, it would allow more diversity in school programs and improvement in instructional materials available. New facilities are particularly needed at Lodge Grass to accommodate the growing school-age population. Decker has a small grade school whose capacity is about 20.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. Sheridan County is divided into three school districts. School District #2 includes the city of Sheridan and a large area around Sheridan. Almost all of the growth in Sheridan County has taken place in School District #2.

The ten public schools in School District #2 include seven schools housing grades K-6, one school housing grades K-8, one junior high school



housing grades 7 and 8, and one senior high school housing grades 9-12. During the school year 1974-1975 these schools served 3,216 students. Four of the schools (Highland Park, Linden, Woodland Park, and Central Junior High School) operated during the 1974-1975 school year at or above capacity. Table SI-3 gives the analysis of pupil/teacher loading.

The superintendent of School District #2 estimated that the district is capable of handling an additional 300 students. This additional capacity would be approximately half at the secondary level and half at the elementary level.

The additional elementary children would have to be bused to equalize school loads. Busing to equalize school loads is presently practiced and is, as noted below, an unpopular practice.

The quality of the school buildings varies considerably. Several schools require extensive repairs and remodeling. Table SI-4 gives an indication of the age and condition of the school buildings.

School District #2 is now in the position of expanding the school facilities. The district has only approximately \$260,000 in bonding capacity remaining. The district will not have an increased bonding capacity in the foreseeable future. Because the district levies the maximum allowable millage, 25 mills as of July 1, 1975, it receives supplemental funds from the state. These funds, estimated by the superintendent at \$400,000, are restricted to operating expenses and may not be used for capital expenses.

Given the condition of the district's existing facilities and the present pupil/teacher loadings, the school system is only marginally adequate. The busing of children from one neighborhood to another is the source of serious parental irritation ("This is getting to be just like the big cities



Table SI-3

Factor Analysis of Land and Pupil/Teacher Loading, School District #2, Sheridan, Wyoming

<u>Name of School</u>	<u>Grades</u>	<u>Teaching Stations</u>	<u>Number of Classroom Teachers</u>	<u>1972-73 Enroll- ment</u>	<u>Max. Pupil/ Classroom Acceptable</u>	<u>Pupil/ Teacher Ratio</u>	<u>Growth Factor (Pupils)</u>	<u>Existing Acreage</u>	<u>Desired Acreage</u>
Coffeen School	K-6	19	19	411	1:27	1:21.6	+5.4	9	9
Highland Park	K-6	13	13	373	1:27	1:28.7	-1.7	4.85	9
Linden School	K-6	13	13	352	1:27	1:27	capacity	1.32	9
Taylor School	K-6	7	7	165	1:27	1:23.6	+3.4	2.1	7
Acme School ¹	1-6	4	3	24	1:27	1:8.0	N.A.	6.0 est.	5
Beckton School ¹	1-6	2	1	12	1:27	1:12.0	N.A.	.9 est.	5
Story School ¹	K-6	3	3	49	1:27	1:16.3	N.A.	.9 est.	5
Woodland Park	K-6	7	7	198	1:27	1:28.3	-1.3	5.99	10
	7-8	4	4	65	1:25	1:16.2	8.8		
Central School	7-8	18	18	456	1:25	1:25.3	-.3	4.39	20
High School	9-12	44	58	1,137	1:25	1:19.6	+5.4	6.6	26
Special Educ.	T-S	7	6	67	1:10	1:11.1	+3		2

¹Generalized acceptable standards of maximum pupils per classroom cannot be applied to the Acme, Beckton, or Story schools due to the multiple grading within each classroom area, thus negating growth factors.

Source: "Program for Growth: School District Number Two, Sheridan, Wyoming," prepared by Lewis-Eaton Partnership (architects-engineers-planners), Jackson, Mississippi, 1973.



Table SI-4

Summary of School District #2 Facilities, Sheridan, Wyoming, 1972-1973

<u>Name and Location of School</u>	<u>Grades</u>	<u>Teaching Stations</u>	<u>1972-73 School Enroll- ment</u>	<u>Major Special Facilities</u>	<u>Original Construction Date</u>	<u>Condition of Structure</u>
Coffeen School 1105 S. Sheridan Ave.	K-6	19	411	library/resource center, gym-cafeteria combination	1965	good ¹
Highland Park 1301 Avon	K-6	13	373	library, gym-cafeteria combination	1954 1966 (lib.)	good
Linden School Whitney St. @ Linden	K-6	13	352	library, gym-cafeteria combination	1916 1954 (add.)	deteriorated ² / dilapidated ³
Taylor School 1020 N. Main St.	K-6	7	165	gym/cafeteria combination, district superintendent's office	1910 1941 (add.) 1954 (K)	deteriorated

¹Good: those structures having no major defects or only slight defects normally corrected during the course of regular maintenance.

²Deteriorated: those structures requiring more repair than would be provided during the course of regular maintenance. They have one or more defects of an intermediate nature that must be corrected if these structures are to continue to provide adequate, economical, and safe shelter for schoolchildren.

³Dilapidated: those structures not providing adequate shelter due to one or more critical defects or a combination of intermediate defects in sufficient number to require extensive repair or rebuilding.



Table SI-4 (continued)

<u>Name and Location of School</u>	<u>Grades</u>	<u>Teaching Stations</u>	<u>1972-73 School Enrollment</u>	<u>Major Special Facilities</u>	<u>Original Construction Date</u>	<u>Condition of Structure</u>
Acme School Acme, Wyoming	1-6	4	24	none	1900	dilapidated
Beckton School West of Sheridan	1-6	2	12	none	1949	good
Story School Story, Wyoming	K-6	4	49	none	1956	good
Woodland Park Buffalo Star Route	K-8	14	263	gym-cafeteria combination	1952 1959 (add.) 1964 (add.)	good/ deteriorating
Central Junior High Custer Ave. @ East Loucks St.	7-8	18	456	auditorium, library, gym, cafeteria	1919 1956 (add.) 1966 (add.)	good/ deteriorating
High School Lewis St. @ Adair	9-12	37	1,137	gym, resource center, library, cafeteria	1926	deteriorating
Agricultural Bldg.		2			1972	good
Industrial Arts Bldg.		5				good
Hill School Gym		-			1950	dilapidated
Hill School (Special Ed.)		T-S*	67	none	1908	dilapidated

*Trainable; intermediate; junior high; and senior high students.

Source: "Program for Growth: School District Number Two, Sheridan, Wyoming," prepared by Lewis-Eaton Partnership (architects-engineers-planners), Jackson, Mississippi, 1973.



we left to come here") and reflects pressure on existing facilities. The extra capacity, noted by the superintendent, refers to aggregate classroom space, not to ability to adequately maintain or expand the total physical plant of the school system.

Sheridan's housing situation makes it very difficult for new school personnel to find/afford suitable housing. A school official said that salaries in the mining industry have affected this problem by attracting away several certified and noncertified school employees.

The survey indicated general satisfaction with the grade schools and high school. When asked about the schools, 72 percent said they were satisfied with the grade schools, and 62 percent said they were satisfied with the high school.

School District #1, which includes the communities of Big Horn, Dayton, and Ranchester, has a total enrollment of 627. Table SI-5 gives the distribution of students.

The superintendent estimated that the Big Horn elementary school could handle a maximum of 40 to 50 additional students and that the Tongue River elementary school could handle only 15 to 20 additional students. Both high schools are at their capacity. A bond issue for an elementary/junior high at Ranchester is in the planning stages.

School District #3, which serves Clearmont and Amada, has a total enrollment of 109. There are 45 in the high school, 20 in the junior high, and 44 in the elementary school. The superintendent estimated that the present total enrollment could be doubled without additional facilities.

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Table SI-5

Enrollment by School in School District #1, Sheridan County

	<u>Big Horn</u>	<u>Tongue River Area</u>
High school	100	140 (at Dayton)
Junior High	45	63
K-6	123	152 (at Ranchester)



Recreation

Rosebud County, Montana. Forsyth has very few organized recreational programs. These consist of little league baseball, school sports programs, and activities at the Senior Citizens Center. The municipal swimming pool needs improvement but presently offers free swimming in the summer. Hunting and fishing are primary recreational activities. The influx of newcomers will place more demands on recreational facilities.

Colstrip has a serious shortage of recreational facilities. Western Energy spokesmen state that they have plans to build a wide variety of facilities.

Big Horn County, Montana. Hardin has very limited recreational facilities and opportunities. Some plans have been made for a badly needed youth recreational center and swimming pool. Hunting is one of the principal recreational activities. Organized youth activities are limited to school functions. Both organized activities and opportunities for unorganized recreation need to be increased.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. Sheridan County has varied recreational opportunities for all age groups. The YMCA, which is well endowed by local foundations, offers a wide variety of recreational facilities and programs. Annual membership in the YMCA, which now costs \$96 for a family membership and \$25 for a high school student, is prohibitive for many families. The city provides a swimming pool, tennis courts, golf course, gymnasium, ice skating rinks, playgrounds, and a small zoo. Many respondents commented that Sheridanites have easy access to good hunting and fishing. A few observed that, for those who like outdoor activity, Sheridan is an especially good place to retire. Within the city, however, most people felt that there are



only limited recreational opportunities for all who are on tight budgets. The recreational facilities are above average for a town the size of Sheridan. According to our survey, 74 percent of respondents expressed satisfaction with the recreational facilities.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

Rosebud County, Montana. Rosebud County is served by a 15-man, combined city-county law enforcement department. Ten men are assigned to Forsyth, two to Colstrip, two to Ashland, and one to Birney. The department meets national adequacy standards of one officer per 500 residents. Two highway patrolmen operate in Rosebud County.

Big Horn County, Montana. A seven-man police force serves Hardin. The force is equipped with only two cars and handles only minor problems. Felonies are investigated by the sheriff's department. The sheriff and other deputies are responsible for all of Big Horn County excluding Indians on the Crow Reservation but including whites on the reservation. Given the equipment shortages and the division of responsibility, the law enforcement coverage is inadequate. The sheriff is also the county fire marshal. This responsibility could be better filled by some other person or organization. The Indian police have responsibility for tribal members on the reservation.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. The city of Sheridan is served by a 21-member police department. This number is inadequate. The sheriff's department has six full-time officers. This number is also inadequate. Given a population in Sheridan of approximately 13,000 and in the county outside of Sheridan of 6,300, the city police should have 26 members and the sheriff's department



should have 13 members.*

In the past when Sheridan was homogenous and stable, a police and sheriff's department smaller than state adequacy standards might have been acceptable. The quality of police protection was an important item to the survey respondents. A majority, 56 percent, indicated that they were satisfied with police protection. However, when the respondents were given a list of eight community services and asked to pick the service that most needs to be improved, the police services were the second most common one selected (see table SI-6).

Sheridan's current law enforcement situation. Over the years, Sheridanites have come to expect the police department to provide a variety of helping services in addition to law enforcement. As a result the relationship between police officers and townspeople has been friendly, cordial, and informal. The community's rapid growth during the past few years has begun to change this relationship, owing to the influx of many job seekers who cannot be counted on to treat policemen as friends and neighbors. This urbanizing influence has forced the police to become less trustful and more formal than they have been and has led our respondents to feel that, although the police department recently hired four new men, it needs to add still more officers if it is to adequately meet present law enforcement demands. Accordingly, when only 56 percent of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with police protection (see table SI-7), the message we were getting was that dissatisfaction was more with lack of

*Using the adequacy standard of one officer per 500 population is derived from the national and Wyoming averages as cited in "Powder River Basin Capital Facilities Study," Intermountain Planners and Wirth-Berger Associates, prepared for the Wyoming Department of Economics, Planning, and Development, April 1, 1974, page 52.



Table SI-6

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Services Most Needing Improvement--First and Second Choices

In Sheridan, which of these services most needs to be improved?	Years of Residence in Sheridan County					Total
	under 1 year	more than 1, less than 3 years	3 but less than 5 years	5-10 years	much or all of life	
<u>First choice</u>						
schools	0.0	0.0	2.5	1.7	10.0	14.2
police	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	15.8	17.5
fire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.5
health care	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.5
water/sewage	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.0	4.2	6.7
streets/roads	1.7	3.3	3.3	3.3	12.5	24.2
city government	0.0	0.0	1.7	3.3	10.8	15.8
county government	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.7	2.5
declined to respond/don't know/none	2.5	0.0	0.8	2.5	8.3	14.2
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0
<u>Second choice</u>						
schools	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	5.8	7.5
police	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.7	14.2	16.7
fire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	3.3
health care	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.0	6.7	9.2
water/sewage	1.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	5.8	10.0
streets/roads	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.8	5.0	7.5
city government	0.8	0.0	4.2	1.7	7.5	14.2
county government	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	3.3	5.0
declined to respond/don't know/none	3.3	0.8	1.7	5.0	15.8	26.7
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0



Table SI-7

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Satisfaction with Police Protection

<u>Are you satisfied at present with police protection?</u>	<u>Years of Residence in Sheridan County</u>					<u>Total</u>
	<u>under 1 year</u>	<u>more than 1, less than 3 years</u>	<u>3 but less than 5 years</u>	<u>5-10 years</u>	<u>much or all of life</u>	
Satisfied	5.8	3.3	5.8	6.7	34.2	55.8
Dissatisfied	0.0	0.8	3.3	1.7	25.8	31.7
Neutral	0.0	0.0	0.8	3.3	6.7	10.8
Don't know	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.7
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0



numbers than lack of quality. The job to be done is generally thought to require a larger police force.

Fire Protection

Rosebud County, Montana. A well-organized, 17-member city volunteer fire department serves Forsyth. The sheriff's department is responsible for providing a volunteer force to fight rural fires. The county fire unit has three spray trucks, one six-by-six Army surplus truck with a 2,000 gallon tank, and one 1935 fire truck. Colstrip is served by a company-owned truck and a 12-man company fire department.

The fire protection is presently adequate for Forsyth and Colstrip. The rural protection could be stronger if an organized volunteer force existed.

Big Horn County, Montana. A 15-member volunteer city force serves Hardin. The rural areas are served by volunteer firemen consisting of sheriff's deputies and employees of the county roads and bridge department. Hardin has one new fire truck and one backup truck. The county has two trucks, each having 1,000 gallon tank capacity. Lodge Grass and Decker each have an Army surplus six-by-six truck with a tank and pump. In the past, Sheridan County trucks have assisted in the Decker area. The Wyoming Attorney General has ruled that Wyoming trucks may not cross state borders. Considering this situation, the fire protection for the Decker area should be increased.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. A 16-man, full-time fire department serves the city of Sheridan. The department is equipped with three trucks with pumps of 750 gallons per minute capacity or greater. The present equipment



is adequate for Sheridan. Respondents generally felt that the fire department is of high quality but of barely sufficient size. Several pointedly suggested that another fire station would be desirable. A more pressing problem lies in the annexation of areas which have inadequate waterlines.

The county has a four-man force at the airport, providing 24-hour, on-duty service. The force has three trucks with pumping capacities of 500, 750, and 1,900 gallons per minute. In addition, each of the 12 fire zones has a four-by-four truck with 275 gallons of water for fighting prairie fires.

The Veterans Administration Hospital has its own fire department and equipment.

Social Services

Rosebud County, Montana. Five staff members serve the combined Rosebud County and Treasure County Welfare Department located in Forsyth. Assistance payments have continued at the same level for several years and possibly will not increase as the population grows and job opportunities expand. Some increases in welfare loads in Colstrip might be expected during the intervals between peak construction periods or before workers are able to relocate.

The department provides home visits by a professional homemaker to the elderly, disabled, and blind. The only youth services are available from the mental health outreach workers and the local drug and alcoholism programs.

The Rosebud residents expressed satisfaction with the adequacy of the welfare services offered.

Big Horn County, Montana. The Big Horn County Welfare Department is operated by a seven-member staff, including two social workers and one full-time and one part-time homemaker. The department handles all categories of



welfare in the county and all categories except general assistance and child welfare on the Crow Reservation. These two programs are handled by the BIA welfare office. The county welfare staff report spending much of their time on Indian-related work.

There are no special outreach programs for senior citizens or youth. The department feels that a need exists for both programs. The funding is not presently available. Other than these areas of need, the welfare services are adequate.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. A staff of nine operates the welfare department in Sheridan. Their caseloads include 119 receiving Aid to Families of Dependent Children, 33 children in foster homes, and from six to eight each month receiving General Assistance payments. Two hundred fifty receive Social Security incremental payments, a larger number than normal for a community the size of Sheridan. This load may be attributed to the larger-than-average population of residents who are 65 or older. The department considered other caseloads normal for a community the size of Sheridan.

The welfare department has very limited outreach capabilities. The YMCA, which is very well endowed, has a wide variety of programs for both the elderly and youth. There is a Meals-on-Wheels program operated by volunteers and a senior citizens' bus.

A Youth Services Project, which is funded by a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grant and is related to the juvenile court, provides an information service, family counseling, and a job opportunities program for youth. Counseling services are available from the Mental Health Center. Also, there is an extensive alcoholism program for veterans and Indians at the local VA hospital.



Health Services

Health Care Personnel

Rosebud County, Montana. Presently one physician practices in Forsyth. A nurse practitioner operates in a clinic office in Colstrip where a doctor is available one day a week. Ashland has a similar clinic which is visited weekly by a doctor. One Public Health nurse serves all of Rosebud County. The county's greatest health care need is for skilled nurses and physicians, especially physicians. Many patients currently prefer to travel to Miles City, Billings, or Sheridan, Wyoming for treatment of minor ailments. Using the standard of one physician per 1,222 persons, Rosebud County should have at least another three physicians. Colstrip, which has a population of approximately 2,000, does not have a resident physician. At least one more Public Health nurse is needed for the county.

Big Horn County, Montana. One physician and one physician's assistant serve the hospital in Hardin, Montana. The Indian Health Service operates an out-patient clinic at Lame Deer on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, and the Northern Cheyenne tribe expects to construct a million dollar Indian Health Service clinic building at Lame Deer this year. An Indian Health Service hospital at Crow Agency on the Crow Reservation serves both reservations. There are two Indian Health Service physicians, three nurses, and one physician's assistant at Lame Deer and Crow Agency. Their practice is limited to tribal members only. The physicians have historically left after completing their two-year commitment to the Indian Health Service. Presently non-Indian residents go to Billings or Sheridan.

Using the above-mentioned standard for physicians, Big Horn County needs five to six more physicians to provide adequate medical service in the county.



Sheridan County, Wyoming. Sheridan has 21 physicians, including such specialists as a pathologist, a radiologist, and pediatricians. There are approximately 60 registered nurses at the hospital. The hospital has complete laboratory facilities. The number of physicians exceeds the adequacy standard for Sheridan County. As mentioned before, Sheridan serves as a regional medical center. The personnel are presently adequate for this role.

In the survey of the city of Sheridan (see Appendix SI-3), 80 percent of the respondents indicated satisfaction with the medical services in Sheridan. Only 10 percent indicated dissatisfaction. The responses tend to indicate that the medical services in Sheridan have in the past been adequate.

Sheridan's present health situation. While over 80 percent of Sheridan's residents indicate that they are satisfied with the city's medical and dental services, some who are generally satisfied go to Billings (especially to the Billings Clinic) for the services of specialists, and those who are not satisfied usually go to Billings for all of their health care. There is a little less satisfaction (a little over 70 percent) with Sheridan's hospital, which several respondents who claimed to be particularly informed about the situation said is due to the hospital personnel being too resistant to making the changes which young doctors often attempt to make. Some of the turnover among new doctors is thought by these informants to be an expression of the doctors' frustration with the hospital personnel--and with the older doctors who typically fail to rally to their support. Some cynics believe that too many of the younger doctors who stay in town only a short time are attracted more by money than the opportunity for serving mankind. For example, one respondent, commenting on the recent high turnover of young doctors, said:



"They are perfectly reasonable. If they can't make their fortune in two weeks, they are willing to stay three."

Respondents generally felt that health care for the elderly left much to be desired. Their reaction to the town's nursing home was mixed, and they pointed to the need for retirement facilities which would offer desired health services to residents who are still essentially able to care for themselves.

The rapidly rising cost of health care in Sheridan is generally thought to be unrelated to coal development.

Hospitals

Rosebud County, Montana. A new 26-bed hospital serves Forsyth and northern Rosebud County. The facilities include coronary and intensive care units. The hospital administration estimates an occupancy rate of approximately 80 percent. The hospital appears adequate for the area. However, as noted before, the limiting factor on the availability of health care is the shortage of physicians and nurses. Many patients use Miles City and principally Billings for hospital services. The Northern Cheyenne use the Indian Health Service hospital at Crow Agency. People living south of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Rosebud County use the Sheridan hospital or one of the Billings hospitals.

Big Horn County, Montana. A new 16-bed hospital serves Hardin and the non-Indian population of Big Horn County. The hospital includes coronary care, surgery, and obstetrical units. The hospital is well equipped for its size. Indians from the Crow Reservation must use the Indian Health Service hospital at Crow Agency if they are receiving federally financed medical care.



Again, the factor limiting health care is the number of physicians and nurses. The hospital, even with its approximately 50 percent occupancy rate, appears to be presently adequate. Many residents use hospitals in Billings and Sheridan.

The hospital at Crow Agency serves only tribal members. Some members elect to pay for their own medical expenses and use hospitals in Sheridan and Billings.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. The 89-bed Sheridan hospital is the best staffed and provides the most extensive facilities in the study area. The hospital has a coronary care unit as well as surgical, obstetrical, pathological, and radiological services.

Using the standard of four hospital beds per 1,000 people,* the hospital facilities are more than adequate for the population of Sheridan County. In the survey of the city of Sheridan, 72 percent of the respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the hospital services.

The hospital serves the patients of Big Horn County and Rosebud County in Montana and Campbell County and Johnson County in Wyoming. When these counties are considered, judging the adequacy of the hospital is more complex. The 89 beds are adequate for a population of approximately 22,200, using the standard of four beds per 1,000 population. This figure exceeds the present population of Sheridan County by approximately 2,900.

Approximately 30 percent of the patients using the Sheridan hospital live outside of Sheridan County. The size of this group indicates that changes in

*The adequacy standard of four beds per 1,000 population is based on the national average of 1,183 patient days per 1,000 of population multiplied by roughly 82 percent average occupancy rate for each hospital. These figures lead to a projected need of four hospital beds per 1,000 of population in each county.



population in surrounding counties, particularly Campbell County, will have a significant impact on the Sheridan hospital.

Ambulances

Rosebud County, Montana. Ambulance service for the northern part of the county is provided by one county-owned ambulance. This vehicle lacks respiratory equipment. There is no backup vehicle. Western Energy Company has an ambulance for Colstrip, along with five company employees with emergency medical training.

The Indian Health Service provides ambulance service for the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Rosebud residents living south of the reservation depend on the two ambulances in Sheridan.

Big Horn County, Montana. Two ambulances, which are operated by three salaried staff, provide good ambulance service for Big Horn County. The ambulance crew is well trained in emergency medical procedures.

Decker Coal Company officials have indicated that the company would have an ambulance and crew on duty at the proposed mine sites.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. Two Sheridan funeral homes provide Sheridan County with two ambulances and a backup vehicle. These units also provide service to Decker and Birney in Montana because these towns are closer to the city of Sheridan than to the major service areas in their own counties. The ambulance operators have some training in first-aid procedures, but emergency medical services are not their primary daily concern.

While 73 percent of the people in Sheridan are satisfied with the ambulance service, it is not a profit-making venture according to the funeral home operators. Expansion of the service or addition of more sophisticated



equipment will depend on the good will of the present operators or contributions by the city, county, or hospital.

Retirement/Nursing Homes

Rosebud County, Montana. A 39-bed nursing wing is attached to the hospital at Forsyth. For the present, this facility is meeting the needs of the elderly in Rosebud County.

A retirement home may be needed if housing costs continue to increase, forcing the elderly out of their homes and apartments.

Big Horn County, Montana. A 34-bed, county-supported nursing home is connected to the hospital at Hardin. The facility is designed for elderly patients needing constant care. One R.N. and one L.P.N. supervise each shift. A 22-bed nursing home provides services for elderly needing less intensive attention. A part-time R.N., as well as physical and occupational therapists, is available to work with the patients as needed.

Both facilities have very short waiting lists of three to five. In the past, such waiting lists have not meant the denial of services to the elderly. The two facilities are considered adequate to meet present demands.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. A 96-bed nursing home and extended care facility serves Sheridan and the surrounding counties. The nursing home has professional therapists providing physical, occupational, and speech therapy programs. A retirement home for 120 persons is planned. This retirement home will be quite expensive, costing a minimum of \$200 per month for an efficiency apartment and \$75 or \$80 per month for required partaking of noon meals. The bonds which will finance this home have not yet been sold. A waiting list already exists for this home.



In 1970, 16 percent of the Sheridan County population was 65 or older. This sizable group places more demands on geriatric service in Sheridan County than is found in other parts of the study area. In the past, the elderly have been able to find reasonably priced housing in Sheridan; in fact, most of them live in their own homes.

In the survey, 81 percent of the respondents indicated satisfaction with services for senior citizens.

Mental Health Facilities

Rosebud County, Montana. The Eastern Montana Mental Health Center, which serves an 18-county area from its headquarters in Miles City, provides one full-time counselor to serve Rosebud County. The counselor works in a Forsyth office and does not have outreach programs. Mental health assistance in Rosebud County is limited to residents of Forsyth and those who are willing and able to travel to Forsyth.

Big Horn County, Montana. The South Central Montana Mental Health District has two staff members in Hardin. Their outreach efforts are mainly devoted to school-related problems. Their caseloads are heavy, limiting the development of needed educational and preventative programs.

Sheridan County, Wyoming. The Northeast Wyoming Mental Health Organization serves a five-county area of northern Wyoming. The organization, which is located in Sheridan, has five full-time staff members including a psychiatrist and a child psychiatrist. The Mental Health Center offers comprehensive services which are above average for Wyoming communities. The staff feels that the programs are minimal compared with the local needs.

The organization is funded by the city and county. The county has refused to increase its appropriations for the organization. The staff



members have opposed state involvement because of the state's restrictions and controls. Although the program appears above average, and the center seems to have emerged as the leader and coordinator of the area's mental health service programs, funding was reported to be tenuous and subject to future fluctuation.



CHAPTER III
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS



Impact

Introduction

It was very difficult for people to imagine the impact of developments that they had not experienced. Most of them felt sure that they would welcome "development" (payrolls and tax revenues) but not "growth" (crowding and inflated prices). The present Decker mine operation seemed to them to represent desirable "development" without undesirable "growth." Responses to our survey questionnaire shed light on the development-growth dilemma and related matters.

There was substantial agreement among our respondents that the impact of the 250 or so new families on community services would be detrimental. Particularly hard hit, they believed, would be police protection (76 percent thought the impact would be detrimental) and grade schools (72 percent). In fact, more than half of the people thought that the high school (65 percent), sewage service (62 percent), hospital services (61 percent), water supply system (59 percent), streets and roads (57 percent), fire protection (56 percent), and recreational facilities (55 percent) would be adversely affected by the population influx resulting from expansion of the Decker mine. Moreover, between 41 and 48 percent thought that shopping facilities (48 percent), medical services (48 percent), ambulance service (43 percent), city government (42 percent), and dental services (41 percent) would be adversely affected. Least affected would be mental health services (37 percent) and county government (34 percent). Forty-seven percent thought that service to senior citizens would be unaffected.

Our respondents felt slightly more sanguine about other likely impacts. For example, 54 percent thought that there will probably be more jobs (see



table SI-8), 59 percent believed that local people will still control decisions (see table SI-9), and 49 percent anticipated that newcomers will be easily accepted into the community (see table SI-10). On the other hand, it was the feeling of 81 percent that the price of housing will go up sharply, 45 percent thought that Sheridan will not be a better place to live, 41 percent thought that the town will be unable to handle the 1,000 or so new people (see table SI-11), and 57 percent thought that they will be less safe than they have been. It was the expectation of 74 percent of those we surveyed that the population influx will have no effect on their feeling of being a part of the community of Sheridan, 73 percent that the influx will have no effect on their overall feelings toward the town, 62 percent that the influx will not affect their enjoyment of life in general, and 52 percent that the influx will have no effect on their opportunities for better or more secure jobs.

As for the main changes in Sheridan during the past three years, 55 percent thought that housing costs had changed (i.e., risen) most, while 27 percent thought that other living costs had changed most. Decker's principal effect on Sheridan has been twofold according to our respondents. Whereas 34 percent said that the company's principal effect on the town has been economically beneficial, 37 percent said that its principal effect has been to increase rents and living costs. Overall, however, people in Sheridan have a positive feeling toward Decker, and 52 percent would definitely not oppose the proposed mine expansion. Others (35 percent) would like more information about these plans and the likely consequences before making up their minds on the expansion question.



Table SI-8

Head of Household's Employer, by Reaction to the Statement that the Expected
Population Influx would Generate More Jobs in Sheridan

If 250 families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan, would you agree, disagree, or be neutral toward the state- ment that there would be <u>more jobs in Sheridan?</u>	Head of Household's Employer							Declined to respond	Total
	<u>Self- employed</u>	<u>Govern- ment</u>	<u>Mine- related/ Decker</u>	<u>Mine- related/ Big Horn</u>	<u>Mine- related/ other</u>	<u>Other nongov- ernmental</u>	<u>N.A.</u>		
Agree	10.8	8.3	5.8	1.7	0.8	11.7	13.3	1.7	54.2
Disagree	5.8	5.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	17.5	6.7	1.7	38.3
Neutral	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.8	0.0	4.2
Don't know	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	3.3
Total	17.5	14.2	8.3	1.7	0.8	32.5	21.7	3.3	100.0



Table SI-9

Head of Household's Employer, by Reaction to Statement that the Expected
Population Influx Would Not Affect the Control of Local Decisions

If 250 families (at least
1,000 people) move into
Sheridan, would you
agree, disagree, or be
neutral toward the state-
ment that local people
would still control
decisions?

	Head of Household's Employer						N.A.	Declined to respond	Total
	<u>Self- employed</u>	<u>Govern- ment</u>	<u>Mine- related/ Decker</u>	<u>Mine- related/ Big Horn</u>	<u>Mine- related/ other</u>	<u>Other nongov- ernmental</u>			
Agree	10.8	9.2	3.3	1.7	0.8	19.2	11.7	2.5	59.2
Disagree	4.2	2.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	6.7	5.0	0.0	22.5
Neutral	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.8	0.0	3.3
Don't know	2.5	2.5	0.8	0.0	0.0	4.2	4.2	0.8	15.0
Total	17.5	14.2	8.3	1.7	0.8	32.5	21.7	3.3	100.0



Table SI-10

Head of Household's Employer, by Reaction to Statement that Newcomers Would be Easily Accepted Into Community if 250 New Families Move Into Sheridan

If 250 families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan, would you agree, disagree, or be neutral toward the statement that the newcomers would be easily accepted into the community?

	Head of Household's Employer						Declined to respond	Total
	<u>Self-employed</u>	<u>Government</u>	<u>Mine-related/Decker</u>	<u>Mine-related/Big Horn</u>	<u>Mine-related/other</u>	<u>Other nongovernmental</u>		
Agree	9.2	5.0	3.3	0.8	0.0	16.7	12.5	49.2
Disagree	4.2	4.2	3.3	0.8	0.0	8.3	2.5	25.0
Neutral	2.5	2.5	0.8	0.0	0.8	2.5	2.5	11.7
Don't know	1.7	2.5	0.8	0.0	0.0	5.0	4.2	14.2
Total	17.5	14.2	8.3	1.7	0.8	32.5	21.7	100.0



Table SI-11

Head of Household's Employer, by Reaction to Statement that Sheridan
Could Handle Expected Population Increase

If 250 families (at least
1,000 people) move into
Sheridan, would you agree,
disagree, or be neutral
toward the statement that
Sheridan could handle
that many more people?

	Head of Household's Employer							Declined to respond	Total
	<u>Self- employed</u>	<u>Govern- ment</u>	<u>Mine- related/ Decker</u>	<u>Mine- related/ Big Horn</u>	<u>Mine- related/ other</u>	<u>Other nongov- ernmental</u>	<u>N.A.</u>		
Agree	2.5	5.8	5.8	0.0	0.8	11.7	8.3	1.7	36.7
Disagree	8.3	6.7	0.8	1.7	0.0	14.2	8.3	0.8	40.8
Neutral	2.5	1.7	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.7	0.8	8.3
Don't know	4.2	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	5.8	3.3	0.0	14.2
Total	17.5	14.2	8.3	1.7	0.8	32.5	21.7	3.3	100.0



In general, respondents felt that it was somewhat difficult for them to separate Decker's past social impact from that of other coal companies and extremely difficult to separate out future ones, given what they have heard about the likelihood that other companies' development plans will soon be implemented. Moreover, even though the analysis of population which appears elsewhere in this report suggests that the proposed expansion might cause Sheridan's population to increase by 1,500 to 2,000, we feel confident that the people we surveyed would have responded no differently to these figures than they did to the phrase, "at least 1,000 [more] people," which we used in the questionnaire. Our respondents had so much difficulty imagining what an increase of a thousand or so people would be like that it would not have made any difference in their responses if we had asked about the increase in terms of 1,500 to 2,000 new people.

Quality of Life and Social Values

During the course of our interviews with questionnaire respondents we heard a number of remarks about what the proposed Decker mine expansion will do to or for Sheridan, its way of life, and its social structure. The following are some representative quotes concerning these general impacts. More specific impacts on housing, community services, and the like will be discussed in subsequent sections.

It is hard for us to grasp the likelihood of great change here. Some of the business interests would welcome it, but most of us really don't welcome it, even though we feel we should go along with it.

What if we become another Gillette or Rock Springs? Does the country really need the energy that badly?

No matter what happens, Sheridan will cope. Sheridan has always risen to the occasion. We will cope if we have to.



Our enjoyment of life will be negatively affected by more people and more traffic and not knowing the people you meet on the street.

Will the locals still control things? I hope so.

More liberals and colored people will come in.

If we just had to contend with new people, fine, but we'll have to contend with industry. I have in mind that other companies will be moving here, too.

Sheridan can't get any better.

I can't see that the town would change that much. I've been in boom towns and generally there was no long lasting effect.

Table SI-12 shows what effect residents of Sheridan thought the present Decker mine has had on their community.

The People

The employed. One-fourth of the respondents to the survey said that their own job opportunities would be improved or more secure if the mine expanded, and 52 percent said expansion would have no effect on their own jobs. Conversely, 54 percent said that there would be more jobs available in Sheridan and 38 percent disagreed. This compares with 37 percent who agreed that present job opportunities were good, and 47 percent who disagreed. Mine expansion would likely increase competition for available labor and the existing low-income labor pool would become smaller.

The elderly. The impact of the population influx would affect senior citizens in two important ways. The miners, with their average salary of over \$17,000, would cause some inflation in the costs of goods and services. Senior citizens on fixed incomes would be less able to cope with inflated prices. This inflation is noticeable now in the cost of housing. Given the present shortage of housing, future population influxes will greatly increase



Table SI-12

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Principal Effect of the Decker Mine on Sheridan

What has been the principal effect of the strip mining industry on Sheridan (select one)?	Years of Residence in Sheridan County					Total
	under 1 year	more than 1, less than 3 years	3 but less than 5 years	5-10 years	much or all of life	
No impact	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8
Economically beneficial	1.7	2.5	4.2	5.0	20.8	34.2
Economically beneficial but socially detrimental	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	5.8
Increased rents and living costs	2.5	1.7	4.2	4.2	24.2	36.7
Crowded service and recreational facilities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2	4.2
Addition of more educated and interesting people	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7
Improvement in the general housing situation, e.g., construction of new housing and remodeling of old	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	2.5
Don't know	0.0	0.8	0.8	2.5	8.3	12.5
Declined to respond	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8	1.7
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0



the competition for housing. Senior citizens will be at a disadvantage. As housing costs rise, those senior citizens who rent may look to the city and county for assistance with housing.

The second major area of impact would be a change in the character of Sheridan. What we mean here is that Sheridan's population of older people has already stopped growing as a result of the housing situation described above, and that this population will begin to decline in the next two years and continue doing so for many years to come. Sheridan is now in the early stages of changing from a haven for retired ranchers and farmers to a place where it will be increasingly difficult for older people to enjoy the controlled, relaxed, and rural-service-town atmosphere which had been its main attraction before the town's recent growth cycle began. In a word, as the town becomes bigger, more urbanized, more impersonal, and still more expensive, retired people will tend to settle elsewhere and natural attrition will reduce the number of Sheridan's senior citizens.

Ranchers in Montana. Even though the coal issue has sharply divided some areas, some residents are making a real effort to keep alive the old social relationships, the old neighboring and helping patterns. These people feel that these good relationships which have been nurtured in the past have kept the communities together in hard times before. One informant said that in times of crisis before her community had always drawn closer together and had gained strength from them. Now, she said, the coal issue is tearing the community asunder.

There is a feeling that local BLM and Forest Service people are good and dedicated and have the interest of the local people at heart. One informant said, however, she feels that if they are against strip mining



and coal development they may not be able to express this to their supervisors for fear of putting their positions in jeopardy. She thought the pro-development personnel would have more freedom to speak out and influence their superiors.

Almost every rancher expressed fear that the large corporations will get control of the land. This may account for the fact that more people are leasing rather than selling. If the land is leased and mined the rancher loses control over its use for many years but he does not relinquish the ultimate control of it. He may be content with knowing that his children will later at least have the choice of deciding what they want to do with the land. If he sold it now he would forego them that choice.

A few people have said they believe the regional offices of the BLM and Forest Service know now what they have planned for their lands in this area and the former wonder why the agencies do not tell the people now rather than placating them with more studies. This, these informants lamented, is just one more source of information that is withheld from the people concerned, the people who have momentous decisions ahead of them. If the feds would come out and tell their plans people could make better choices, they said.

The old practice of "that's his business" that was part of the Golden Rule here and the attitude of "I'll go it alone" had a survival value in the past but, just like some biological adaptations and overspecializations, these may now cause the species to become extinct. Some are now saying they believe neighbors should tell each other if they are going to lease and the exact terms of the lease. Ranchers have traditionally cooperated in other things but now perhaps it is in their best interest to cooperate in business



dealings. In fact, one large group of ranchers in the Quietus-Sayle area did go together and draw up a lease agreement with all agreeing on the terms of the agreement, and then they all signed the same lease agreement with the broker who leased their land.

A couple of informants have said that, if other people are leasing to coal companies, that is a good indication of how they feel, meaning they are showing that they are for coal development because they have leased their land. Some people have questioned how a person can lease his land and still be against development. They have told us that anyone in that position is a liar. One informant said:

What irritates me is that some people will tell you one thing and then do the other. If someone has said all along that they were against coal development and then they turn around and lease it shows you their real colors.

Another informant says it makes him very angry "to hear people mouth principles and then have them do the opposite." Few of the residents show that they are aware that people's attitudes toward something and their behavior concerning it are often two different things.

Most people have not read the Decker-Birney report because they have heard of a few of the conclusions and recommendations, they feel this is a final statement of fact, and they are not going to change or influence it--so why try? Why even read it? People say there is less and less discussion of the coal issue in most of the communities now because most feel that the decisions have been made. A couple informants have said, "I don't waste my time trying to change something as foregone as this coal development. I just try to work with it now." So many people are interpreting what they read and hear as final instead of preliminary in any sense. They are letting their feeling of "inevitability" color all information and decisions.



One young rancher felt the coal industry would offer him the opportunity to stay in the area if he did not make it in ranching. He said it is very difficult for a person starting up to be successful in ranching and he would rather have the chance to stay in his area and work for a coal company if he went broke ranching rather than have to move to a city and work at something else.

Some ranchers believe those who think they can stay and continue ranching with full-scale coal activity have a rather "pollyana-ish" attitude. This is evident, they say, in the fact that people are leasing rather than selling and moving out of the area to where they can ranch undisturbed. Critics of this optimistic attitude say that if people really comprehended the coming impact they would not for a minute believe they could live with it and therefore would not lease.

One man said the coal issue is making people reassess what they want out of life. Before, they never really had a choice or felt they had a choice, but now they do. They can actually choose whether they want to (1) sell out and retire and know they will have enough for a good retirement, (2) trade for a much bigger ranch, or (3) move to another area. This is very hard on some people, just suddenly having the opportunity to choose. The same person said some ranchers may be tied to the land but not wedded to it. The choices that people are making now might indicate which it is.

There may be some second thoughts about trading up, i.e., trading a ranch to a coal company for a larger ranch that the company will buy for the person somewhere else. Many ranchers have said this would be the ideal thing to do, that if they could make a good enough deal and get a much better and bigger ranch than they now have there would be no question that they



would uproot and move to a new place. The economics of the situation would facilitate severing any social ties they might have to their old community. One lawyer interviewed who represents some ranchers in the study area who are thinking of selling said that when he confronts them with some of the possible problems of trading up it makes them think twice. He said he has pointed out the problems of running more cattle and the chance the rancher would have to depend on more help at a time when it is almost impossible to hire a good hand. He says they would not have more money, only more assets to worry about. If they get some irrigated or farmland, it takes tremendous capital investments to improve or just to maintain and operate the equipment, not to mention the work and long hours involved. Also, the only attractive land which is available is probably hundreds of miles away. He repeated that many go away thinking twice about it.

The maps in Appendix SI- further describe the impact of coal-related development on the rural area around Decker.

Miners. Miners in the survey were the strongest supporters of expansion of the Decker mine. Seventy percent of the miners in the survey agreed that there would be more jobs available in Sheridan and that Sheridan could handle the impact. They reported more concern about housing availability and less concern about rising costs than did the rest of those surveyed.

Other Sheridan residents. So far coal-related development has been extensive enough to help local businessmen but not so large scale as to attract chain stores and discount centers. Some small family businessmen were fearful that increasing coal development would bring unwanted competition, but other young businessmen saw potential opportunities for moving up to newly created managerial positions. Respondents in "blue collar" and clerical



jobs supported expansion of the mine more strongly than "professionals" did, but about the same as the average person in the survey.

Housing

Since there are virtually no rentals available nor moderately priced houses for sale at this time, and little construction underway, the addition of any work force to the area would put a severe strain on a housing situation that most residents are already describing as "terrible." Preliminary information from the county's housing survey showed fewer than 30 available housing units in Sheridan. When that survey is completed more accurate information will be available.

Mobile home parks are now under construction, and there is some remodeling and new building, but all of that seems needed to ease only the existing pressure for housing. Table SI-13 projects the number of housing units needed to accommodate the incoming workers. In 1976 there would be a need for 476 new housing units in Sheridan County if both mines are opened.

Most residents, 81 percent, said that they expect the price of housing to go up sharply if the mine expansion is approved; and, as indicated in table SI-14, 69 percent expect that the biggest change in Sheridan from the mine expansion will be increased housing costs (22 percent) or decreased housing availability (47 percent). Some landlords said that this would be a change for the better, whereas some property owners would be pleased to see the value of their property rise. Since 86 percent of the residents reported that they expect to remain in the area the rest of their lives, they apparently would not want to profit from the increased valuation.



Table SI-13

Number of New Decker Employees and Their Housing Demands in Sheridan County

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980- 2000</u>
If only the East Decker Mine opens:					
Number of new employees ¹	265	175	165	165	155
Number of housing units needed in Sheridan County ²	238	157	148	148	139
If only the North Extension of the West Decker Mine opens:					
Number of new employees	265	345	605	595	637
Number of housing units needed in Sheridan County	238	310	544	535	573
If both mines open:					
Number of new employees	530	520	770	760	792
Number of housing units needed in Sheridan County	476	467	692	683	712

¹Includes both mine employees and full-time derived employees.

²Assumes that 90 percent of the employees will live in Sheridan County and that each employee will generate a demand for one housing unit.



Table SI-14

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Anticipated Effect of Expected Population Influx

If 250 new families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan in the next two years, which of the following items would be most affected (select one)?	Years of Residence in Sheridan County					Total
	under 1 year	more than 1, less than 3 years	3 but less than 5 years	5-10 years	much or all of life	
Housing costs	0.8	0.8	2.5	0.0	17.5	21.7
Other living costs	0.0	0.8	0.0	1.7	5.8	8.3
Employment opportunities	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	5.0	6.7
Recreational opportunities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8
Community services (c.g., schools, police)	0.0	1.7	0.0	5.0	3.3	10.0
Relationships between groups of people	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.5
Housing availability	4.2	1.7	6.7	4.2	30.8	47.5
Health-related services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Declined to respond	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.5
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0

Calling attention to another aspect of housing impact, an employment officer said, "We could provide most of the construction force for expansion except for housing." In the same vein, it should be noted that among the 37 percent who agreed that Sheridan could handle the number of people that would come with mine expansion were many who qualified their assurance with, "except for housing."

There would surely have to be more mobile home parks constructed in the county where regulations are less restrictive if the Sheridan area would have to provide most of the housing for the proposed mine expansion. Since location of these parks is generally not dictated by the availability of classroom space in schools, irritations already caused by busing students out of their neighborhoods would become more acute. As pressures grow for more school funds, residents who own single family homes would feel they are carrying an unfair tax burden because trailer owners would be paying lower property taxes. The traditions of most people owning their single family homes would further conflict with those of trailer residents, many of whom would harbor resentments of their own for not being given the opportunity to live in single family homes.

The impact on fixed-income and low-income residents would increase sharply since no subsidized housing nor other low-income housing is near construction. The cost of housing would probably make Sheridan an unlikely place for retirement except for the well-to-do.

Although not all of the increased housing costs and decreased housing availability would be caused by expansion of the Decker mine, most people would blame the situation on that expansion. The effects of other developments such as the impact from Lake DeSmet and Gillette are not so concentrated



nor obvious, and the impact from other proposed developments closer to Sheridan would come after the Decker expansion had borne the heavy burden of being first. Also, these other Wyoming developments would be considered more desirable because the tax revenue would be Wyoming's.

Water and Sewage

The additional population may not overload the total capacity of either the water treatment or sewage treatment plants. This impact will depend on the distribution of the new arrivals in Sheridan County. However, the water distribution lines and the sewage collection lines are already inadequate in some sections of Sheridan. Additional housing in these sections would aggravate the existing situation.

The study of Sheridan's water and sewage system should provide accurate information on the present loading and potential capacity of the distribution and collection systems. This study will be completed in January 1976.

Transportation

No matter where the additional workers would live, the road between Decker and Sheridan would receive the greatest impact of increased travel, although I-90 to Billings would be more heavily traveled as more people turned to Billings for service.* Since "streets and roads" was named most often as a service that needed improvement right now, it is not surprising that 57 percent of the survey respondents said that streets and roads would be detrimentally affected by mine expansion.

*More information will soon be available from the Montana State Highway Department's survey.



Schools

Using the population projections developed in this report it is possible to make predictions of the impact the incoming school age population will have on Sheridan. Based on past patterns, it is assumed that all incoming school age children will live in School District #2. The error in this assumption should be negligible.

Table SI-15 gives the number of school age children in Sheridan and Big Horn counties. The Sheridan County total is divided into the number of children associated with the North Extension and the East Mine. The demographic section of the report explains in detail the assumptions behind these projections.

If both mines open, School District #2 would have to find room for approximately 286 new students during the 1976-1977 school year. As previously noted, the superintendent estimates that district schools have room for a total of about 300 children. It is important to note that at least half of this available space is in the high school. It is extremely unlikely that the incoming children will mesh with the vacant spaces. Some crowding in excess of the maximum acceptable capacity of classrooms would result. Maximum acceptable classroom capacity in Sheridan is listed as 27 for grade schools and 25 for high schools. Using the standard of 18.2 children per teacher,* the Sheridan schools are inadequate. Table SI-16 applies this adequacy standard to last year's District #2 enrollment. The

*Intermountain Planners and Wirth-Berger Associates, "Powder River Basin Capital Facilities Study," prepared for the Wyoming Department of Economics, Planning, and Development, April 1, 1974, page 35.



Table SI-15

Projected School Age Population Increase and Resulting Need for Additional Classrooms/Teachers
at Maximum Capacity and to Meet Adequacy Standards for New Students -
Sheridan and Big Horn Counties

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>After 1980</u>
<u>Sheridan County</u>						
1. If both mines open:						
a. Total additional school age population	286	282	471	483	504	504
b. Classrooms/teachers needed at maximum capacity ¹	11	11	19	19	20	20
c. Classrooms/teachers needed to meet adequacy standards ²	16	15	26	27	27	27
2. If only the North Extension of the West Decker Mine opens:						
a. Total additional school age population	154	110	104	104	98	98
b. Classrooms/teachers needed at maximum capacity	6	4	4	4	4	4
c. Classrooms/teachers needed to meet adequacy standards	9	6	6	6	5	5
3. If only the East Decker Mine opens:						
a. Total additional school age population	132	172	367	379	406	406
b. Classrooms/teachers needed at maximum capacity	5	7	15	15	16	16
c. Classrooms/teachers needed to meet adequacy standards	7	9	20	21	22	22
<u>Big Horn County</u>						
Total additional school age population if both mines open	32	31	53	54	56	56
Classrooms/teachers needed at maximum capacity	1	1	2	2	2	2
Classrooms/teachers needed to meet adequacy standards	2	2	3	3	3	3

¹Maximum acceptable capacity per classroom of 27 students (see table 2).

²18.2 children per teacher (source: Government Printing Office publication D4EW(OE) 73-11402 by Betty Foster as cited in Intermountain and Wirth Berger Associates, "Powder River Basin Capital Facilities Study" for the Wyoming Department of Economic Planning and Development, April 1, 1974, page 35).



Table SI-16

Additional Teachers and Classrooms Needed to Meet Adequacy Standards¹ during School Year 1975-1976 -
School District #2, Sheridan, Wyoming

<u>School²</u>	<u>Grades</u>	<u>Number of Existing Teaching Stations</u>	<u>Number of Classroom Teachers</u>	<u>1974-1975 Enrollment</u>	<u>Additional Teachers and Classrooms Needed to Meet Adequacy Standards</u>
Coffeen	K-6	19	19	411	3
Highland Park	K-6	13	13	373	7
Linden	K-6	13	13	352	6
Taylor	K-6	7	7	165	1
Woodland Park	K-6	7	7	198	4
	7-8	4	4	65	-
Central School	7-8	18	18	456	7
High School	9-12	44	56	1,137	7 ³
Total number of additional teachers required to meet adequacy standards					35

¹18.2 children per teacher, cited by "Powder River Basin Capital Facilities Study" for the Wyoming Department of Economic Planning and Development, page 35.

²Acme, Beckton, and Story schools have been excluded because they have more than one grade in a classroom.

³Indicates only the number of additional teachers required to meet 18.2 students per teacher.



district presently needs a total of 35 additional teachers to serve the school age population at an adequate pupil/teacher ratio. If both proposed Decker mines open, the district will require an additional 16 teachers during the 1976-1977 school year to serve the incoming students at an adequate pupil/teacher ratio (see table SI-17). Only 11 teachers would be needed if the pupil/teacher ratio was maintained at the maximum acceptable level.

School District #2 has several options in dealing with this potential increased enrollment:

1. The district may elect to do nothing, accepting classrooms with a pupil/teacher ratio at or above the maximum acceptable level.
2. The district may buy or rent mobile classrooms to supplement existing facilities.
3. The district may build new classrooms. This option is limited both by the district's legal ability to spend for capital facilities and the voters' willingness to accept increased indebtedness. As noted before, School District #2 is very close to the limit of its legal indebtedness. The district may look to other sources, such as the states of Montana and Wyoming and the coal companies, for capital funds.

If the district chooses to do nothing now, it faces two years of operation at its maximum capacity. Then in 1978, if both mines open, the mine-related school age population will be 471. This number will exceed the district's maximum capacity; thus, if the district does nothing during the next two years, it may be able to accommodate students in overcrowded conditions. However, in the years thereafter, additional facilities will be mandatory. People in Sheridan already expect that Decker's expansion



Table SI-17

Total Number of Teachers Needed to Meet Adequacy Standards Now and In
the Future - School District #2, Sheridan, Wyoming

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>After 1980</u>
Total additional teachers presently needed to meet adequacy standards ¹	35	35	35	35	35	35
Number of additional teachers needed to serve new students at the adequacy standard:						
if only the East Decker Mine opens	7	9	20	21	22	22
if only the North Extension opens	9	6	6	6	5	5
if both mines open	16	15	26	27	27	27
Total additional teachers needed to serve present students and new students if both mines open	51	50	51	52	52	52

¹See table SI-16.



will cost them more to support the schools. About 79 percent of our respondents opined that increases in staff and facilities will make it necessary for taxes to go up during the next two years. Also, as one of these respondents said:

Newcomers will live in mobile homes that are not taxed as high as other residences, so we [old-timers] will have to pay extra for school expansion.

Squirrel Creek elementary school (grades 1-8) at Decker has a 1975-1976 enrollment of seven. Last year there were 15 students but three graduated, four moved away from ranches which were bought for the Decker mine, and one mine family (two students) moved to Wyoming. This fall a first-grader brought the enrollment to seven.

In the survey of Sheridan residents, 72 percent of the respondents indicated satisfaction with grade schools and 63 percent indicated satisfaction with the high school. When they were asked how the influx of 250 families during the next two years would affect the grade schools and the high school, 72 percent indicated that the influx would be detrimental to the grade schools and 65 percent indicated that the influx would be detrimental to the high school (see table SI-18).

It is not possible to accurately predict the impact of the projected influx on the quality of education in School District #2. It is reasonable to expect a strong reaction to the degradation of a community service with which the residents are currently satisfied. It is also reasonable to expect increased dissatisfaction with busing as more students are bused to equalize school enrollment.



Table SI-18

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Expected Effect of Population Influx on Schools

If 250 new families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan during the next two years, how would schools be affected?	Years of Residence in Sheridan County					Total
	under 1 year	more than 1, less than 3 years	3 but less than 5 years	5-10 years	much or all of life	
Increased and/or improved	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	3.4
Decreased and/or detrimental to	2.5	3.8	7.1	8.8	46.7	68.9
Unaffected	1.7	0.4	0.0	2.1	6.2	10.4
Don't know	1.7	0.8	2.5	0.8	9.6	15.4
Declined to respond	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	1.7	2.1
Total	5.9	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.6	100.0



Recreation

The population influx would place increased demand on recreational facilities. The residents of Sheridan who are accustomed to uncrowded outdoor recreational facilities expect to feel the greatest impact. For example, many informants expressed the concern that outdoor recreation will become too crowded and hunting unsafe. They pointed out that much private land is already being posted. People who were indoor recreationists account for the finding that 49 percent of Sheridanites believed that the anticipated impact of Decker's expansion would have no effect on recreational opportunities.

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

The population influx associated with the Decker mine would place additional strain on an already understaffed police department. Table SI-19 indicates the number of additional officers that would be needed in Sheridan County to provide coverage at the average level in Wyoming. If both mines open, 14 additional officers will be needed in 1976. These officers will require equipment, e.g., patrol cars, and capital facilities, such as an enlarged jail. The survey respondents were asked how the arrival of 250 new families, at least 1,000 people, would affect police protection. Seventy-five percent indicated that this influx would make it harder to provide adequate police protection (see table SI-20). In fact, many respondents pointed out that there is already an increase in the number of people who drink too much and a growing tendency of residents to lock their cars and houses. It is also getting more difficult to cash a check without displaying identifying credentials. In general, the respondents



Table SI-19

Projected Need for Law Enforcement Officers, Sheridan County

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>
Projected Sheridan County population ¹	20,684	20,684	21,301	21,335	21,426
Number of law officers required ²	41	41	43	43	44
Number of law officers currently in Sheridan County	27	27	27	27	27
Number of additional officers needed	14	14	16	16	17

¹Projected Sheridan County population assumes that both mines will open.

²One law officer per 500, based on national and Wyoming averages as cited in Intermountain Planners and Wirth-Berger Associates, Powder River Basin Capital Facilities Study for the Wyoming Department of Economic Planning and Development, page 52.



Table SI-20

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Expected Effect of Population Influx on Police Protection

If 250 new families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan during the next two years, how would police protection be affected?

	Years of Residence in Sheridan County					Total
	under 1 year	more than 1, less than 3 years	3 but less than 5 years	5-10 years	much or all of life	
Increased and/or improved	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	3.3	5.8
Decreased and/or detrimental to	3.3	4.2	6.7	8.3	53.3	75.8
Unaffected	0.8	0.0	2.5	1.7	5.0	10.0
Don't know	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.8	4.2	6.7
Declined to respond	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0



believed that their feelings of safety would depend largely upon what kinds of people move into the Sheridan area--and that remains to be seen.

Fire Protection

If the population increase stimulates building or adds mobile homes in an area with inadequate water lines, the fire protection in these areas may become critically inadequate. Assuming that many new mobile homes will be located outside the city limits, a great strain will be put on that area's fire protection facilities. These facilities, which are located at the airport, would need to be strengthened. When the city engineer's study of existing water mains is completed, the city should have sufficient information to judge the impact of new construction.

Social Services

The population influx would aggravate the already serious housing problem of welfare recipients. According to the welfare department officials, the new workers are outbidding welfare recipients for the small number of available houses. This problem will become more serious as more new workers move into Sheridan County.

Health Services

The existing health care personnel and facilities should be adequate to take care of the population increase associated with the Decker expansion. However, this influx would raise the area population to the adequacy limit for the hospital. As noted before, residents of surrounding counties use the Sheridan hospital. If these counties experience substantial population increase without a corresponding increase in health care facilities, the



Sheridan hospital will be inadequate to handle the demand. The hospital's capacity, not the number of health care personnel, is at present the main limiting factor in determining health care adequacy in Sheridan County.

Table SI-21 presents the number of hospital beds needed to adequately care for the projected population of Sheridan County. It is not within the scope of this study to project the demand that will be placed on the Sheridan hospital by residents of other counties. This demand may be substantial, given the shortage of medical facilities in surrounding counties.

The ambulance service would experience increased demand. If the Decker Coal Company maintains an ambulance for its employees at the mine site, the existing ambulance service in Sheridan should be adequate.



Table SI-21

Projected Need for Hospital Beds, Sheridan County

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980 & Beyond</u>
Projected population of Sheridan County ¹	20,684	20,684	21,301	21,335	21,426
Number of hospital beds needed for Sheridan County ²	82	82	85	85	86
Number of beds available for patients of sur- rounding counties. ³	7	7	4	4	3

¹See the demographic section of the larger report.

²Adequacy standard of four beds per 1,000 population, based on the national average of 1,183 patient days per year per thousand of population, multiplied by roughly 82 percent average occupancy rate for each hospital.

³Beds in excess of the number needed to adequately serve the population of Sheridan County.



CHAPTER IV
ADDITIONAL MITIGATING OR COMPENSATING MEASURES



Recommended Mitigation MeasuresIntroduction

Most mitigation measures would cost money, and residents of Sheridan are of a mind about how those costs should be paid. Our survey showed that 74 percent think that the industry that employs new families should pay part of the increased service costs; 58 percent think that the coal industry and the states of Wyoming and Montana should jointly help pay these costs (see tables SI-22 and SI-23). This is a simple response to an exceedingly complex problem whose solution probably would require the supreme efforts of many agencies. But the networks required for beginning such efforts are forming. The city government, county government, and industries are cooperating in an area-wide planning council and the states of Montana and Wyoming are participating in regional organizations concerned with energy-related problems. The legal barriers to such cost sharing are undoubtedly formidable and will not be crossed very soon. Some partial relief may be gained by taking more manageable measures; but, in the end, the problem of social costs in Wyoming versus economic benefits in Montana must be attacked by all of the concerned parties.

Some planning money has come from Shell and Decker companies (although they are reported to feel that their operations and expansion would have a minimal effect on Sheridan), and legislation has made it possible for the state of Wyoming to offer some impact assistance. Still, many of the survey respondents said that although the county government is capable of handling the problems of growth, there would not be enough money available to them to do it. Most felt that neither city nor county planning has been underway long enough to tell if such efforts will be effective.



Table SI-22

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Service Costs Related to State Coal Taxes
and Decker Mine Workers' Income Taxes

State coal taxes and workers' income taxes at Decker Mine are payable to Montana although most of the workers live in Wyoming. What can be done about the service costs related to this situation?	Years of Residence in Sheridan County					<u>Total</u>
	<u>under 1 year</u>	<u>more than 1, less than 3 years</u>	<u>3 but less than 5 years</u>	<u>5-10 years</u>	<u>much or all of life</u>	
Nothing; moreover, local business gains and present taxes should be sufficient to pay for service to these workers.	1.7	0.0	1.7	0.8	6.7	10.8
Sheridan will have to levy a city sales tax.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The coal industry should help pay these costs.	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	7.5	8.3
The states of Montana and Wyoming should help pay these costs.	2.5	0.0	0.8	0.8	11.7	15.8
The coal industry and the two states should jointly help pay these costs.	1.7	5.0	6.7	9.2	35.8	58.3
Declined to respond/don't know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	5.8	6.7
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0



Table SI-23

Approval to Expand the Decker Mine, by Service Costs Related to State Coal Taxes
and Decker Mine Workers' Income Taxes

State coal taxes and workers' income taxes at Decker Mine are payable to Montana although most of the workers live in Wyoming. What can be done about the service costs related to this situation?	Approval Should be Granted to Expand the Decker Mine					Total
	Yes	No	Neutral	I need to know more ...	Don't know	
Nothing; moreover, local business gains and present taxes should be sufficient to pay for service to these workers.	9.2	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	10.8
Sheridan will have to levy a city sales tax.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The coal industry should help pay these costs.	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.8	0.8	8.3
The states of Montana and Wyoming should help pay these costs.	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	15.8
The coal industry and the two states should jointly help pay these costs.	23.3	3.3	0.8	28.3	2.5	58.3
Declined to respond/don't know	0.8	0.0	0.8	4.2	0.8	6.7
Total	51.7	6.7	1.7	35.0	5.0	100.0



Quality of Life and Social Values

Impact on services can be mitigated with adequate planning and funding but this does not mean there will be no social change nor that the change will be thought acceptable and good. At best, efforts to mitigate social impact on a community are reactive and defensive, since the social changes in question are not of the community's making and are not under its control.

Some of the best qualities of the small town, Western way of life might be protected if mitigation measures were directed toward keeping development gradual and controlled, said Sheridan residents. This would imply that local groups and industry would have to have input into each other's planning processes. Such words as these were used to express doubt that either of these two groupings was ready for that kind of exchange*:

They [Decker] keep their employees in the dark out there about their plans.

Speculators are planning. Other groups are wondering what to do.

Big money talks and gets its way. What good will planning do, therefore?

Others do not blame industry for inadequate planning.

People don't care yet. Not until they are directly affected.

Decker has been fair to this town. They have tried more than others, like Texaco.

From the 35 percent of those surveyed who checked "I need to know more about the expansion plans and the likely consequences," came such comments as these:

*Quotations from interviews may be paraphrased throughout this report.

I'd like to hear plans from both Decker and the environmentalists at the same time and then weigh one against the other.

People should really know much more about what the deal is all about and what it's going to cost them.

The People

The employed. The working people in the impacted area would be most concerned with mitigating measures discussed for housing and services. Their anticipation of better job opportunities is dampened by the pervasive feeling that, although more people would be needed in supporting services, "outsiders" would get many of the better-paying mine jobs. Some cooperative effort between the local employment office and the mine office might clarify or mitigate that perception.

The elderly. Many older people in Sheridan live alone (and prefer to continue to do so) in their own single family dwellings. Their option to continue that life-style could be extended by increasing financial support for services offered by the Public Health nurse and the Department of Public Assistance and Social Services' homemakers.

Another option that was suggested was a mobile home park especially designed for retirees who wanted to be free of maintenance costs and chores.

The county and city of Sheridan should investigate the need for subsidized housing for senior citizens. The county planner's housing study should provide baseline data to use in judging future rent increases.

Ranchers in Montana. Ranch size is an important factor in whether or not ranchers in a certain area feel they can accommodate coal development. In the Decker area where ranches are generally large, with perhaps an average of 400-600 cows per ranch (see map SI-1 in Appendix SI-4), ranchers interviewed felt they can lease part of their ranches to coal companies for mining

while they continue their cattle operation on the rest. At the same time, however, they believed that this kind of arrangement cannot go on forever and that it will only be a matter of time before mining will cause them to give up ranching here and move elsewhere, or perhaps seek employment at the mine.

Miners. Those presently employed at the mine perceived that the availability of housing was and would continue to be their most severe impact problem. Mitigation measures discussed under housing would be of most concern to them.

Other Sheridan residents. Local businessmen and others might well read and use the reports that have been published on such impacted communities as Colstrip and Forsyth in Montana and Gillette and Rock Springs in Wyoming (see Appendix SI-5). Indeed it would be wise to talk to their counterparts in these places about their experiences and their successes and failures in adjusting to coal-related developments.

Ranchester and Dayton. Ranchester is preparing for growth in several ways. The schools are preparing a bond issue for next year for a combination junior high/grade school building. The schools in School District #1 (Ranchester and Dayton) are not currently overcrowded, but they can accommodate only one or two more pupils per classroom on an average.

There is now one trailer park in Ranchester with no room for expansion and two new subdivisions are being built. The developers want to keep them as single residence subdivisions but may have to let in trailers if they cannot get enough buyers for houses. Even though Ranchester is covered by the county-wide mobile home and subdivision regulations, most people seem to desire that no trailers be allowed in these subdivisions, preferring, if growth comes, that new people be housed in permanent dwellings.



Ranchester and Dayton both have representatives on the Sheridan Area-Wide Planning Board and are attempting to control the growth they know will be coming. Most of the several Ranchester interviewees felt that many of those newcomers associated with either the Decker or the Shell mine would live in or around Ranchester rather than Sheridan because housing and taxes would be slightly cheaper. Also, those younger local people who get jobs at the new mines and are able to have a new house may choose Ranchester over Sheridan.

Those Ranchester people interviewed did not oppose new growth but were hopeful that it would "pay its own way." They indicated preference for permanent homes rather than trailers because they felt the former would provide a better tax base for new schools that would be needed and for other expanded services. Ranchester is in the process now of expanding and paying for new sewage treatment and storage facilities. One fear of growth which they expressed was that these facilities would soon be insufficient.

The few ranchers and farmers talked to were not as favorable toward growth. Theirs were the common fears of landowners that they would have to bear the burden of increased taxes.

It would be incorrect to give the impression that Ranchester people are hoping to become a big town. Rather it is a matter of recognizing that they have some growth now and stand to have much more with the Decker expansion and especially with the Shell mine which will be closer to them.

Housing

The county planners are currently completing a detailed housing survey of Sheridan County so data should soon be available to make it possible to

begin to develop housing plans that should include investigating the feasibility of constructing low-cost and/or subsidized housing. Builders who have expressed a wish to gamble by starting more housing construction before any other industrial development begins have apparently been unable to get financing under present conditions. One said, "By the time the lending institutions are sure enough to put up the money, I won't be able to hire workers. They'll all be at the mine."*

Building mobile home parks in the county** would provide the most obvious and least expensive solution to the housing shortage, but would create some other social problems and do nothing to mitigate other impacts such as tax inequities and service deficiencies.

In response to the question, ". . . do you think that part of the increased cost of services should be paid by the industry that employs . . .," it was suggested that although it might be unfair to expect the employer to help pay for most tax-supported services, companies should help provide housing for their workers. A direct housing subsidy might only further hurt the others in the community who are competing for housing, but 'if such housing assistance were offered at or near the mine site, not only would Sheridan's housing problem be eased but other impacts might also be moderated. Workers who would live in Montana near the mine would be more

*Another version (and a highly unique one) of this situation was given by a local banker:

This bank is still loaning to builders and so is [another local lending institution]. . . . At the rate they are building houses, the town is going to get overbuilt.

**The county's regulations are less restrictive than the city's.



free of the double tax burden which has been a very sore point with them. Transportation costs and energy needed for transportation would be reduced. School impact would be concentrated where revenue from the coal tax could most directly be put to work. Economic benefits and service impacts would probably be distributed more equitably among Sheridan, Hardin, and Decker.

Perhaps the time is ripe to examine the best features of the old company towns that served the deep mines around Sheridan, and to learn from the mistakes and successes of such experiences as that at Colstrip, to see if some innovative, industry-led mitigation measures for housing could be introduced.

Water and Sewage

As soon as the study of the water distribution system is completed, the city of Sheridan should begin updating the system. Until the system is expanded, the addition of water and sewage users should be evaluated on the basis of their effect on the distribution and collection systems.

Transportation

The previously cited highway study should be of use in transportation planning. Commuter service between Sheridan and Decker might be patterned after the bus line which began last year between Forsyth and Colstrip. No evaluation of that service was done for this report.

Schools

School District #2 should immediately begin searching for outside capital expansion funds. The district should contact the states of Wyoming and Montana, the Decker Coal Company, and the federal government.



The district should begin a public information program to explain to its residents the need for increased capital spending to replace and repair existing facilities and to accommodate new students. If the allowable bonding limit is increased by the state of Wyoming, the district should plan for new facilities and put the issue before the voters. In response to the question of which community service Sheridan respondents would be most willing to support with more taxes, "schools" was a runaway winner although it was fourth on the list of services that "most need to be improved." Residents expressed far more willingness to pay for increased school costs than for police, health care, and street repair.

The grade school at Decker could accommodate about 13 more students if a teacher's aide were hired. If housing were made available at Decker, the school would have to be expanded.

Recreation

Most of the people in the study area talked about recreation in terms of a tradition of easy access to "our mountains" and fishing sites. Some resentment was expressed toward "rich ranchers and Eastern dudes" who lease public lands and then limit access to them. Local users and land agencies should try to resolve this irritating situation before pressure from a growing number of frustrated users turns it into a hostile one.

The YMCA, whose recreation program is extensive, was reported to be beginning to plan to reduce membership costs for those who could not afford the full amount.



Public Safety

Law Enforcement

The city and county of Sheridan should begin planning for the extra funding necessary to hire and train additional law enforcement officers. As noted above, most residents chose "schools" as the service they would be most willing to support with more taxes; "police" was their second choice (see table SI-24).

Fire Protection

The city of Sheridan should evaluate requests for new building permits in view of the impact which construction will have on existing waterlines. This consideration will prevent the fire protection from becoming more inadequate. After the Black and Veatch study is completed, Sheridan should develop plans for replacing the inadequate waterlines.

Social Services

The primary demand on the social service agency would be for housing assistance. Increasing costs and almost no vacancies have already burdened the agency's low-income clients, and it is almost certain that construction of additional facilities would lag far behind the demand that mine expansion would add. Only a substantial increase in their assistance allowance could help them compete for even inadequate housing.

Health Services

It is recommended that Montana and Wyoming join with Sheridan, Campbell, and Johnson counties in planning for future health care facilities in the Sheridan County area. The broad base for planning is necessary because the Sheridan facilities serve a broad area, while the hospital is mainly supported by Sheridan County taxpayers.



Table SI-24

Years of Residence in Sheridan County, by Willingness to Support Additional
Services with More Taxes--First and Second Choices

Which services would you be willing to support with more taxes?	Years of Residence in Sheridan County					Total
	under	more than 1,	3 but		much or	
	<u>1 year</u>	<u>less than</u>	<u>less than</u>	5-10	<u>all of</u>	
		<u>3 years</u>	<u>5 years</u>	<u>years</u>	<u>life</u>	
<u>First choice</u>						
schools	4.2	1.7	3.3	6.7	25.8	41.7
police	0.0	0.0	1.7	0.8	8.3	10.8
fire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.5
health care	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.7	5.0	9.2
water/sewage	0.0	0.8	1.7	0.0	1.7	4.2
streets/roads	0.8	1.7	0.8	0.8	7.5	11.7
city government	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.5
county government	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7
declined to respond/none	0.0	0.0	1.7	1.7	12.5	15.8
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0
<u>Second choice</u>						
schools	0.8	1.7	2.5	0.8	9.2	15.0
police	1.7	0.8	0.8	3.3	11.7	18.3
fire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	5.0	5.8
health care	0.8	0.8	1.7	1.7	6.7	11.7
water/sewage	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.8	2.5	5.0
streets/roads	0.0	0.8	1.7	0.0	10.0	12.5
city government	1.7	0.0	0.8	0.8	4.2	7.5
county government	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	1.7
declined to respond/none	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.5	17.5	22.5
Total	5.8	5.0	10.0	11.7	67.5	100.0



The ambulance service should be assumed by the county so that the expansion of services or addition of equipment will be controlled by the county and thus be more responsive to its rapidly changing situation.



CHAPTER V

ADVERSE IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED
IF THE PROPOSALS ARE IMPLEMENTED



Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Housing

Adverse impact on Sheridan's already strained housing market is unavoidable because there would be a serious lag in providing more housing even if plans for it proceed more rapidly than at present. As indicated in the previous sections of this report, the adverse impact on housing would affect social service clients, the elderly, the workers--in short, almost everyone who lives in Sheridan.

Quality of Life and Social Values

The impact of mine expansion on many of the qualities of life that keep people on ranches and in small, Western communities would be irreversible to the extent that the area changed from rural to industrial. Some impacts that might be only temporarily adverse would be related to the construction of new mine facilities; for example, the additional noise, dust, and traffic during the construction period. Removal of agricultural land from production might also be temporary, if studies that are going on in the Decker area show that reclamation is feasible. So far, it appears that this land is some of the most difficult to restore to grazing.

Community Services

The lag in providing community services to the growing population, like the lag in housing supply, seems inevitable even if plans for funding the needed expansion of services were as far along as the plans for mine expansion. A solution to the problem of paying for increased social costs in one state when the coal revenues go to its neighbor is not in sight.



CHAPTER VI

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND
THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY



The Relationship Between Short-Term Uses of Man's Environment and the
Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

It is unlikely that Sheridan's long-term productivity would be enhanced by the mine's expansion since the cost to the community would exceed its tax revenues. Big Horn and Rosebud counties in Montana, on the other hand, would receive tax revenues in excess of their service costs. Both Montana and Wyoming might attract further industrial development because of the mine expansion, but analysis of the costs and benefits of that impact are not within the scope of this study. A cost-benefit comparison of the proposed mine expansion's effects on Sheridan with its effects on other regions would not be advisable even if the data were available. The reason for this is that intersite cost-benefit comparisons (of a local area with the state, region, and nation) always turn out to be tyrannical, not only because they inevitably use a democratic guise to oppress a minority, but because they actually give license to big political, administrative, or other organizational units to gobble up little ones.

CHAPTER VII
IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE
COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES



Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

The Greeks may have had a word for it but this time an Indian said it even better. In the words of Chief Sealath of the Duwanish tribe in a letter sent to President Franklin Pierce in 1885:

The Great Chief in Washington sends word that he wishes to buy our land. How can you buy or sell the sky--the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. Yet we do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water. How can you buy them from us? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shiny pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people.

We know that white man does not understand our ways. One portion of the land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother but his enemy, and when he has conquered it he moves on. He leaves his fathers' graves, and his children's birthright is forgotten.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities. No place to hear the leaves of spring or the rustle of insect wings. But perhaps because I am savage and do not understand--the clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lovely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frog around the pond at night.

The whites too, shall pass--perhaps sooner than other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed and you will one night suffocate in your own waste. When the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses all tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires, where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone. And what is it to say goodbye to the swift and the hunt, the end of living and the beginning of survival.*

*Cited in The Plains Truth (newsletter of the Northern Plains Resource Council), vol. 2, no. 9, September 1973.

SUPPLEMENT



Appendix SI-1: Discussion of Sampling and Survey Procedures

Sampling Procedures

The survey was limited to those residents living within the city of Sheridan. This delineation was made because of time and financial restrictions. Also, it is assumed that the city of Sheridan will bear major impact from a population influx into the county.

Numerous lists of residents of Sheridan were considered the possible basis for a random sample of the city. None was found to be complete. It was decided to use the 1974 Polk city directory of residents in Sheridan.

A sample size of approximately 3 percent of all residential units in Sheridan equaled 120 respondents. These respondents were selected in accordance with standard random sample selection procedures. A sample of 120 for the population of Sheridan provides data at the 95 percent confidence interval which is between the .05 and 0.1 precision levels.

Survey Procedures

The survey items were developed according to the needs of the study and according to information gathered in previous interviews in the area. The preliminary draft of the survey was pretested in Sheridan by three interviewers from July 27 to July 31, 1975. The survey was pretested on randomly selected residents and selected knowledgeable individuals in the community. Information gathered during the pretest was used to improve the survey form and content.

The survey was administered by three interviewers (Raymond Gold, Alice Sterling, and James Devitt) during August 6-16, 1975. The survey



was administered to any adult resident, i.e., over 18 years old, in the living unit. Interviews were conducted both during the day and the evening so that working individuals would not be excluded. Replacements for respondents were selected after a reasonable effort had been made to reach them. The procedure used was uniformly applied and designed to minimize bias.

The results of the survey were coded for computer analysis by the interviewers. After key punching and verification, the data was run using the CROSTABS program. Four items, questions 4, 5, 31, and 89, were cross-tabulated against all other items. Appendix SI-3 presents the total of responses to each item on the questionnaire. It is physically impractical to present all data from the computer output. There are over 1,500 tables on hand at the Institute for Social Research, with literally millions of comparisons and cross-tabulations possible from the survey data. Time and financial restriction necessitated a limited investigation into the survey data.



Appendix SI-2: Questionnaire

Interviewer _____

Date _____

_____ 1. Your age: _____ (2 digits coded as 1 digit)

1. under 20
2. 20-29
3. 30-39
4. 40-49
5. 50-59
6. 60-69
7. 70 and over
9. declined to respond

_____ 2. Sex:

1. male
2. female
9. declined to respond

_____ 3. Occupation of head of household:

1. professional/managerial/supervisory
2. retired
3. blue collar
4. ranch/farm worker
5. clerical
6. not employed (other than retired)
9. declined to respond

_____ 4. Head of household's employer:

1. self-employed
2. government
3. mine-related/Decker
4. mine-related/Big Horn
5. mine-related/other (specify _____)
6. other nongovernment
7. NA
9. declined to respond

_____ 5. Your years of residence in Sheridan County:

1. under 1 year
2. more than 1, less than 3 years
3. 3 but less than 5 years
4. 5-10 years
5. much or all of my life
9. declined to respond

_____ 6. How long do you plan to remain in the Sheridan area?

1. 1 year or less
2. more than 1 but less than 3 years
3. 3 years or more but less than 5 years
4. 5-10 years
5. the rest of my life
6. don't know
9. declined to respond

_____ 7. Marital status of respondent:

1. married, no dependent children
2. married, dependent children
3. not married, no dependent children
4. not married, dependent children
9. declined to respond

_____ 8. Type of home:

1. separate single family home
2. apartment, including duplex-fourplex
3. mobile home (mobile home park)
4. mobile home on private lot
5. other (specify) _____
9. declined to respond

_____ 9. Do you or does head of household own or rent your residence?

1. own
2. rent/lease
9. declined to respond

Indicate whether you agree, disagree, or are neutral about the following descriptions of living in Sheridan:

1. agree
2. disagree
3. neutral
9. declined to respond/don't know

_____ 10. job opportunities are good

_____ 11. people are my kind of people

_____ 12. good shopping facilities

_____ 13. good recreational opportunities

_____ 14. good community service, e.g., schools, law enforcement

_____ 15. available good housing



_____ 16. a good place to raise children

_____ 17. a good place to retire

_____ 18. How would you describe the people you (i.e., head of household) usually associate with after work?

1. geographical group (such as a neighborhood)
2. work-related
3. voluntary associations, e.g., church-related and secular clubs
4. family-related, including own and other families such as parents of children's friends
5. friends
6. informal interest groups, e.g., groups related to hobbies, sports, card playing
7. other (specify) _____
8. don't know
9. declined to respond

_____ 19. In Sheridan, which one of these services most needs to be improved?

1. schools
2. police
3. fire
4. health care
5. water/sewage
6. streets/roads
7. city government
8. county government
9. declined to respond/don't know

_____ 20. Which would be your second choice?

1. schools
2. police
3. fire
4. health care
5. water/sewage
6. streets/roads
7. city government
8. county government
9. declined to respond/don't know

_____ 21. Which one of the above services would you be willing to support with more taxes?

1. schools
2. police
3. fire
4. health care
5. water/sewage
6. streets/roads
7. city government
8. county government
9. declined to respond/none



22. Which would be your second choice?

1. schools
2. police
3. fire
4. health care
5. water/sewage
6. streets/roads
7. city government
8. county government
9. declined to respond/none

23. Do you know about plans to enlarge the Decker Coal Mine?

1. no
2. vaguely familiar (has heard about it)
3. knows something about it
4. quite familiar
9. declined to respond

24. Would you like to know more about these plans?

1. yes
2. no
3. neutral
9. declined to respond

25. If 250 new families (i.e., at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan during the next two years, do you think that part of the increased cost of services should be paid by the industry that employs the new families?

1. agree
2. disagree
3. there will be no increased cost
4. neutral
9. declined to respond

26. Has the arrival of Decker coal miners and related workers increased the cost of housing more than it would have increased as part of a national trend?

1. yes
2. no
3. don't know
9. declined to respond

27. In Sheridan the average rent for an unfurnished, one-bedroom apartment, without utilities is:

1. about \$100 per month
2. about \$125 per month
3. about \$150 per month
4. about \$175 per month or over
5. don't know
9. declined to respond



28. [To be answered only by and about respondents living in rented quarters.]

The rent for this residence is \$ _____ per _____ for

[brief description of dwelling unit] _____

29. Are you or others you know who rent paying higher rent than two years ago for the same place?

1. yes, slightly higher (less than 20 percent)
2. yes, much higher (20 percent or more)
3. no
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

30. Property taxes in Sheridan are _____ taxes in comparable communities?

1. higher than
2. the same as
3. lower than
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

31. State coal taxes and workers' income taxes at Decker Mine are payable to Montana although most of the workers live in Wyoming. Local taxes paid by the workers are property and sales taxes. What can be done about the service costs related to this situation?

1. Nothing; moreover, local business gains and present taxes should be sufficient to pay for service to these workers.
2. Sheridan will have to levy a city sales tax.
3. The coal industry should help pay these costs.
4. The states of Montana and Wyoming should help pay these costs.
5. The coal industry and the two states should jointly help pay these costs.
9. declined to respond

32. What people or institutions are making plans and decisions about growth in Sheridan? (Select the main one.)

1. city planning board
2. county planning board
3. state planning agency
4. industry
5. private agencies, such as Powder River Resource Council
6. the federal government
7. don't know
9. declined to respond



_____ 33. How well are they doing it?

1. adequately
2. inadequately
3. it doesn't matter; planning is not effective
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

_____ 34. How satisfied are you with the public (i.e., your) input into these plans and decisions?

1. satisfied
2. dissatisfied
3. neutral
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

_____ 35. How satisfied are you with Decker's input into these plans and decisions?

1. satisfied
2. dissatisfied
3. neutral
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

Below are listed a number of public services available to residents of Sheridan. Would you please indicate whether you are satisfied at present with each of the following services.

1. satisfied
2. dissatisfied
3. neutral
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

_____ 36. grade schools

_____ 37. high school

_____ 38. police protection

_____ 39. hospital services

_____ 40. ambulance service



- _____ 41. sewage service
- _____ 42. water supply system
- _____ 43. shopping facilities
- _____ 44. streets and roads
- _____ 45. fire protection
- _____ 46. city government
- _____ 47. county government
- _____ 48. mental health services
- _____ 49. recreation facilities
- _____ 50. service to senior citizens
- _____ 51. dental services
- _____ 52. medical services

If 250 new families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan during the next two years, and assuming that Sheridan's city and county finances will be about what they are now, how would each of the following services be affected? It would be:

- 1. increased and/or improved
- 2. decreased and/or detrimental to
- 3. unaffected
- 4. don't know
- 9. declined to respond

- _____ 53. grade schools
- _____ 54. high school
- _____ 55. police protection
- _____ 56. hospital services
- _____ 57. ambulance service
- _____ 58. sewage service
- _____ 59. water supply system
- _____ 60. shopping facilities
- _____ 61. streets and roads
- _____ 62. fire protection
- _____ 63. city government
- _____ 64. county government
- _____ 65. mental health services
- _____ 66. recreation facilities
- _____ 67. service to senior citizens
- _____ 68. dental services
- _____ 69. medical services



If 250 new families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan, what effect would that have on the following aspects of your life?

1. increase or improve
2. decrease or be detrimental to
3. no effect
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

- _____ 70. better and/or more secure job opportunities
- _____ 71. recreational opportunities
- _____ 72. enjoyment of life in general
- _____ 73. feelings toward Sheridan
- _____ 74. feeling being a part of the community of Sheridan
- _____ 75. feelings of safety

If 250 families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan, would you agree, disagree, or be neutral toward the following statements?

1. agree
2. disagree
3. neutral
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

- _____ 76. There would be more jobs in Sheridan.
- _____ 77. All of us would have to pay more taxes for schools.
- _____ 78. Local people would still control decisions.
- _____ 79. Sheridan would be a better place to live.
- _____ 80. The newcomers would be easily accepted into the community.
- _____ 81. The price of housing would go up sharply.
- _____ 82. Sheridan could handle that many more people.



83. We are interested in learning about social change in Sheridan. Which one of the following items has changed most in the past three years?

1. housing costs
2. other living costs
3. employment opportunities
4. recreational opportunities
5. community services (e.g., schools, police)
6. relationships between groups of people
7. health-related services
8. don't know
9. declined to respond

84. Has this change been for the better or worse?

1. better
2. worse
3. neither better nor worse
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

85. If 250 families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan in the next two years, which of the following items would be most affected (select one)?

1. housing costs
2. other living costs
3. employment opportunities
4. recreational opportunities
5. community services (e.g., schools, police)
6. relationships between groups of people
7. housing availability
8. health-related services
9. declined to respond

86. Would it be affected for the better or worse?

1. better
2. worse
3. neither better nor worse
4. don't know
9. declined to respond

87. Have the workers from the present Decker Mine had any effect on Sheridan?

1. yes--I am aware of them
2. no--I haven't noticed them
3. don't know
9. declined to respond



88. What has been the principal effect of the Decker Coal Company on Sheridan (select one)?

1. no impact
2. economically beneficial
3. economically beneficial but socially detrimental
4. increased rents and living costs
5. crowded service and recreational facilities
6. addition of more educated and interesting people
7. improvement in the general housing situation, e.g., construction of new housing and remodeling of old
8. don't know
9. declined to respond

89. Everything considered, I believe that approval should be granted to expand the Decker Mine.

1. yes
2. no
3. neutral
4. I need to know more about the expansion plans and the likely consequences
5. don't know
9. declined to respond

-- August 1975



Appendix SI-3: Questionnaire Responses

Appendix SI-3 reports the total of responses to each item on the questionnaire. Four items, questions 4, 5, 31, and 89, were cross-tabulated against all other items. A few of these tabulations are presented in tables throughout the text (tables SI-1, SI-2, SI-6, SI-7, SI-8, SI-9, SI-10, SI-11, SI-12, SI-14, SI-18, SI-20, SI-22, SI-23, and SI-24). There are more than 1,500 cross-tabulations available in table form at the Institute for Social Research, University of Montana. Further analysis of the data could produce many other desired comparisons of the survey items.



QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE DECKER MINE:

ADMINISTERED TO A RANDOM SAMPLE OF SHERIDAN RESIDENTS

Response Choices	Percent Making Each Choice
Your age:	
under 20	1.7
20-29	23.3
30-39	16.7
40-49	21.7
50-59	8.3
60-69	12.5
70 and over	15.8
declined to respond	0.0
Sex:	
male	44.2
female	55.8
declined to respond	0.0
Occupation of head of household:	
professional/managerial/supervisory	30.8
retired	23.3
blue collar	32.5
ranch/farm worker	0.8
clerical	8.3
not employed (other than retired)	4.2
declined to respond	0.0
Head of household's employer:	
self-employed	17.5
government	14.2
mine-related/Decker	8.3
mine-related/Big Horn	1.7
mine-related/other (specify)	0.8
other nongovernment	32.5
NA	21.7
declined to respond	3.3
Your years of residence in Sheridan County:	
under 1 year	5.8
more than 1, less than 3 years	5.0
3 but less than 5 years	10.0
5-10 years	11.7
much or all of my life	67.5
declined to respond	0.0



Response Choices		Percent Making Each Choice
How long do you plan to remain in the Sheridan area?		
1 year or less		2.5
more than 1 but less than 3 years		1.7
3 years or more but less than 5 years		1.7
5-10 years		1.7
the rest of my life		85.8
don't know		6.7
declined to respond		0.0
Marital status of respondent:		
married, no dependent children		34.1
married, dependent children		40.0
not married, no dependent children		18.3
not married, dependent children		7.5
declined to respond		0.0
Type of home:		
separate single family home		82.5
apartment, including duplex-fourplex		12.5
mobile home (mobile home park)		4.2
mobile home on private lot		0.0
other (specify)		0.8
declined to respond		0.0
Do you or does head of household own or rent your residence?		
own		73.3
rent/lease		26.7
declined to respond		0.0
Indicate whether you agree, disagree, or are neutral about the following descriptions of living in Sheridan:		
job opportunities are good		
agree		36.7
disagree		46.7
neutral		13.3
declined to respond/don't know		3.3
people are my kind of people		
agree		84.2
disagree		7.5
neutral		8.3
declined to respond/don't know		0.0



Response Choices	Percent Making Each Choice
good shopping facilities	
agree	65.8
disagree	25.0
neutral	9.2
declined to respond/don't know	0.0
good recreational opportunities	
agree	78.3
disagree	12.5
neutral	9.2
declined to respond/don't know	0.0
good community service, e.g., schools, law enforcement	
agree	80.8
disagree	8.3
neutral	10.8
declined to respond/don't know	0.0
available good housing	
agree	7.5
disagree	83.3
neutral	7.5
declined to respond/don't know	1.6
a good place to raise children	
agree	91.7
disagree	5.0
neutral	3.3
declined to respond/don't know	0.0
a good place to retire	
agree	86.7
disagree	8.3
neutral	5.0
declined to respond/don't know	0.0
How would you describe the people you (i.e., head of household) usually associate with after work?	
geographical group (such as a neighborhood)	10.8
work-related	18.3
voluntary associations, e.g., church-related and secular clubs	10.0
family-related, including own and other families such as parents of children's friends	22.5
friends	5.0
informal interest groups, e.g., groups related to hobbies, sports, card playing	25.0
other (specify)	6.7
don't know	1.7
declined to respond	0.0



Response Choices

Percent
Making
Each Choice

In Sheridan, which one of these services most needs to be improved?

schools	14.2
police	17.5
fire	2.5
health care	2.5
water/sewage	6.7
streets/roads	24.2
city government	15.8
county government	2.5
declined to respond/don't know	14.2

Which would be your second choice?

schools	7.5
police	16.7
fire	3.3
health care	9.2
water/sewage	10.0
streets/roads	7.5
city government	14.2
county government	5.0
declined to respond/don't know	26.7

Which one of the above services would you be willing to support with more taxes?

schools	41.7
police	10.8
fire	2.5
health care	9.2
water/sewage	4.2
streets/roads	11.7
city government	2.5
county government	1.7
declined to respond/none	15.8

Which would be your second choice?

schools	15.0
police	18.3
fire	5.8
health care	11.7
water/sewage	5.0
streets/roads	12.5
city government	7.5
county government	1.7
declined to respond/none	22.5



Response Choices	Percent Making Each Choice
Do you know about plans to enlarge the Decker Coal Mine?	
no	15.0
vaguely familiar (has heard about it)	47.5
knows something about it	26.7
quite familiar	10.8
declined to respond	0.0
Would you like to know more about these plans?	
yes	44.2
no	25.8
neutral	30.0
declined to respond	0.0
If 250 new families (i.e., at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan during the next two years, do you think that part of the increased cost of services should be paid by the industry that employs the new families?	
agree	74.2
disagree	15.8
there will be no increased cost	0.0
neutral	8.3
declined to respond	1.7
Has the arrival of Decker coal miners and related workers increased the cost of housing more than it would have increased as part of a national trend?	
yes	69.2
no	14.2
don't know	16.7
declined to respond	0.0
In Sheridan the average rent for an unfurnished, one-bedroom apartment, without utilities is:	
about \$100 per month	19.2
about \$125 per month	30.0
about \$150 per month	24.2
about \$175 per month or over	10.0
don't know	16.7
declined to respond	0.0
Are you or others you know who rent paying higher rent than two years ago for the same place?	
yes, slightly higher (less than 20 percent)	20.8
yes, much higher (20 percent or more)	50.0
no	1.7
don't know	27.5
declined to respond	0.0



Response Choices		Percent Making Each Choice
Property taxes in Sheridan are _____ taxes in comparable communities?		
higher than		8.3
the same as		25.0
lower than		16.7
don't know		50.0
declined to respond		0.0
State coal taxes and workers' income taxes at Decker Mine are payable to Montana although most of the workers live in Wyoming. Local taxes paid by the workers are property and sales taxes. What can be done about the service costs related to this situation?		
Nothing; moreover, local business gains and present taxes should be sufficient to pay for service to these workers;		10.8
Sheridan will have to levy a city sales tax;		0.0
The coal industry should help pay these costs;		8.3
The states of Montana and Wyoming should help pay these costs;		15.8
The coal industry and the two states should jointly help pay these costs;		58.3
declined to respond		6.7
What people or institutions are making plans and decisions about growth in Sheridan? (Select the main one.)		
city planning board		29.2
county planning board		16.7
state planning agency		4.2
industry		3.3
private agencies, such as Powder River Resource Council		8.3
the federal government		20.8
don't know		17.5
declined to respond		0.0
How well are they doing it?		
adequately		20.8
inadequately		13.3
it doesn't matter; planning is not effective		0.0
don't know		65.0
declined to respond		0.8



Response Choices		Percent Making Each Choice
How satisfied are you with the public (i.e., your) input into these plans and decisions?		
satisfied		35.8
dissatisfied		20.0
neutral		17.5
don't know		26.6
declined to respond		0.0
How satisfied are you with Decker's input into these plans and decisions?		
satisfied		31.7
dissatisfied		10.8
neutral		10.0
don't know		47.5
declined to respond		0.0
Below are listed a number of public services available to residents of Sheridan. Would you please indicate whether you are satisfied at present with each of the following services.		
grade schools		
satisfied		71.7
dissatisfied		11.7
neutral		4.2
don't know		12.5
declined to respond		0.0
high school		
satisfied		62.5
dissatisfied		17.5
neutral		5.8
don't know		14.2
declined to respond		0.0
police protection		
satisfied		55.8
dissatisfied		31.7
neutral		10.8
don't know		1.7
declined to respond		0.0
hospital services		
satisfied		72.5
dissatisfied		21.7
neutral		1.7
don't know		4.2
declined to respond		0.0



Response Choices		Percent Making Each Choice
ambulance service		
satisfied		73.3
dissatisfied		6.7
neutral		7.5
don't know		12.5
declined to respond		0.0
sewage service		
satisfied		74.2
dissatisfied		15.8
neutral		5.0
don't know		5.0
declined to respond		0.0
water supply system		
satisfied		79.2
dissatisfied		13.3
neutral		4.2
don't know		3.3
declined to respond		0.0
shopping facilities		
satisfied		66.7
dissatisfied		26.7
neutral		6.7
don't know		0.0
declined to respond		0.0
streets and roads		
satisfied		50.0
dissatisfied		34.2
neutral		15.0
don't know		0.8
declined to respond		0.0
fire protection		
satisfied		84.2
dissatisfied		8.3
neutral		1.7
don't know		5.8
declined to respond		0.0
city government		
satisfied		41.7
dissatisfied		34.2
neutral		12.5
don't know		11.7
declined to respond		0.0



Response Choices	Percent Making Each Choice
county government	
satisfied	55.0
dissatisfied	15.0
neutral	15.0
don't know	15.0
declined to respond	0.0
mental health services	
satisfied	73.3
dissatisfied	6.7
neutral	5.0
don't know	15.0
declined to respond	0.0
recreation facilities	
satisfied	74.2
dissatisfied	19.2
neutral	5.0
don't know	1.7
declined to respond	0.0
service to senior citizens	
satisfied	80.8
dissatisfied	6.7
neutral	5.8
don't know	6.7
declined to respond	0.0
dental services	
satisfied	87.5
dissatisfied	4.2
neutral	3.3
don't know	5.0
declined to respond	0.0
medical services	
satisfied	80.0
dissatisfied	10.0
neutral	5.8
don't know	4.2
declined to respond	0.0

If 250 new families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan during the next two years, and assuming that Sheridan's city and county finances will be about what they are now, how would each of the following services be affected? It would be:

Response Choices	Percent Making Each Choice
grade schools	
increased and/or improved	2.5
decreased and/or detrimental to	72.5
unaffected	8.3
don't know	15.0
declined to respond	1.7
high school	
increased and/or improved	4.2
decreased and/or detrimental to	65.0
unaffected	12.5
don't know	15.8
declined to respond	2.5
police protection	
increased and/or improved	5.8
decreased and/or detrimental to	75.8
unaffected	10.0
don't know	6.7
declined to respond	1.7
hospital services	
increased and/or improved	7.5
decreased and/or detrimental to	60.8
unaffected	17.5
don't know	11.7
declined to respond	2.5
ambulance service	
increased and/or improved	10.8
decreased and/or detrimental to	43.3
unaffected	29.2
don't know	14.2
declined to respond	2.5
sewage service	
increased and/or improved	5.8
decreased and/or detrimental to	61.7
unaffected	11.7
don't know	18.3
declined to respond	2.5
water supply system	
increased and/or improved	8.3
decreased and/or detrimental to	59.2
unaffected	14.2
don't know	15.8
declined to respond	2.5



Response Choices	Percent Making Each Choice
shopping facilities	
increased and/or improved	20.0
decreased and/or detrimental to	47.5
unaffected	22.5
don't know	7.5
declined to respond	2.5
streets and roads	
increased and/or improved	10.8
decreased and/or detrimental to	57.5
unaffected	17.5
don't know	11.7
declined to respond	2.5
fire protection	
increased and/or improved	10.8
decreased and/or detrimental to	55.8
unaffected	19.2
don't know	11.7
declined to respond	2.5
city government	
increased and/or improved	10.0
decreased and/or detrimental to	41.7
unaffected	25.0
don't know	20.8
declined to respond	2.5
county government	
increased and/or improved	10.0
decreased and/or detrimental to	34.2
unaffected	28.3
don't know	25.0
declined to respond	2.5
mental health services	
increased and/or improved	10.0
decreased and/or detrimental to	36.7
unaffected	29.2
don't know	21.7
declined to respond	2.5
recreation facilities	
increased and/or improved	9.2
decreased and/or detrimental to	55.0
unaffected	20.0
don't know	13.3
declined to respond	2.5



Response Choices	Percent Making Each Choice
service to senior citizens	
increased and/or improved	12.5
decreased and/or detrimental to	23.3
unaffected	47.5
don't know	14.2
declined to respond	2.5
dental services	
increased and/or improved	11.7
decreased and/or detrimental to	40.8
unaffected	32.5
don't know	12.5
declined to respond	2.5
medical services	
increased and/or improved	10.8
decreased and/or detrimental to	47.5
unaffected	27.5
don't know	11.7
declined to respond	2.5
If 250 new families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan, what effect would that have on the following aspects of your life?	
better and/or more secure job opportunities	
increase or improve	25.8
decrease or be detrimental to	19.2
no effect	51.7
don't know	2.5
declined to respond	0.8
recreational opportunities	
increase or improve	5.0
decrease or be detrimental to	40.8
no effect	49.2
don't know	3.3
declined to respond	1.7
enjoyment of life in general	
increase or improve	5.8
decrease or be detrimental to	30.0
no effect	61.7
don't know	1.7
declined to respond	0.8



Response Choices		Percent Making Each Choice
feelings toward Sheridan		
increase or improve		6.7
decrease or be detrimental to		16.7
no effect		73.3
don't know		2.5
declined to respond		0.8
feeling being a part of the community of Sheridan		
increase or improve		7.5
decrease or be detrimental to		14.2
no effect		74.2
don't know		3.3
declined to respond		0.8
feelings of safety		
increase or improve		1.7
decrease or be detrimental to		56.7
no effect		36.7
don't know		4.2
declined to respond		0.8
If 250 families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan, would you agree, disagree, or be neutral toward the following statements?		
There would be more jobs in Sheridan.		
agree		54.2
disagree		38.3
neutral		4.2
don't know		3.3
declined to respond		0.0
All of us would have to pay more taxes for schools.		
agree		79.2
disagree		12.5
neutral		3.3
don't know		5.0
declined to respond		0.0
Local people would still control decisions.		
agree		59.2
disagree		22.5
neutral		3.3
don't know		15.0
declined to respond		0.0



Response Choices	Percent Making Each Choice
Sheridan would be a better place to live.	
agree	11.7
disagree	45.0
neutral	32.5
don't know	10.8
declined to respond	0.0
The newcomers would be easily accepted into the community.	
agree	49.2
disagree	25.0
neutral	11.7
don't know	14.2
declined to respond	0.0
The price of housing would go up sharply.	
agree	80.8
disagree	12.5
neutral	2.5
don't know	4.2
declined to respond	0.0
Sheridan could handle that many more people.	
agree	36.7
disagree	40.8
neutral	8.3
don't know	14.2
declined to respond	0.0
We are interested in learning about social change in Sheridan. Which one of the following items has changed <u>most</u> in the past three years?	
housing costs	55.0
other living costs	26.7
employment opportunities	6.7
recreational opportunities	0.8
community services (e.g., schools, police)	0.0
relationships between groups of people	1.7
health-related services	0.8
don't know	7.5
declined to respond	0.8
Has this change been for the better or worse?	
better	7.5
worse	80.0
neither better nor worse	3.3
don't know	7.5
declined to respond	1.7



Response Choices

Percent
Making
Each Choice

If 250 families (at least 1,000 people) move into Sheridan in the next two years, which of the following items would be most affected (select one)?

housing costs	21.7
other living costs	8.3
employment opportunities	6.7
recreational opportunities	0.8
community services (e.g., schools, police)	10.0
relationships between groups of people	2.5
housing availability	47.5
health-related services	0.0
declined to respond	2.5

Would it be affected for the better or worse?

better	3.3
worse	91.7
neither better nor worse	0.0
don't know	2.5
declined to respond	2.5

Have the workers from the present Decker Mine had any effect on Sheridan?

yes--I am aware of them	57.5
no--I haven't noticed them	31.7
don't know	10.8
declined to respond	0.0

What has been the principal effect of the Decker Coal Company on Sheridan (select one)?

no impact	0.8
economically beneficial	34.2
economically beneficial but socially detrimental	5.8
increased rents and living costs	36.7
crowded service and recreational facilities	4.2
addition of more educated and interesting people	1.7
improvement in the general housing situation, e.g., construction of new housing and remodeling of old	2.5
don't know	12.5
declined to respond	1.7



Response Choices	Percent Making Each Choice
Everything considered, I believe that approval should be granted to expand the Decker Mine.	
yes	51.7
no	6.7
neutral	1.7
I need to know more about the expansion plans and the	
likely consequences	35.0
don't know	5.0
declined to respond	0.0



Appendix SI-4: Maps of the Rural Area Around Decker, Montana

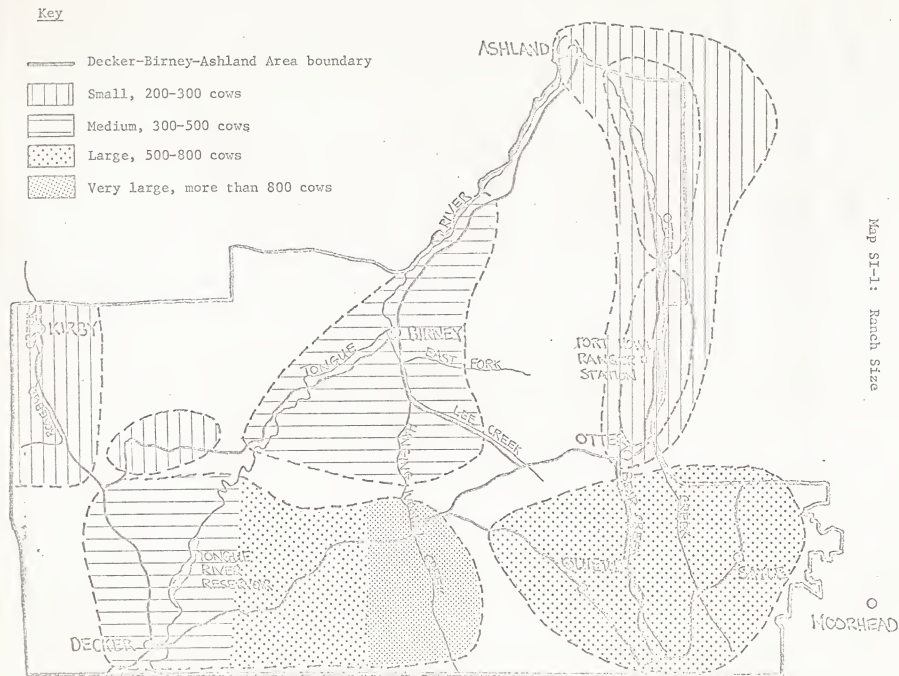
The following maps were originally a part of a report to the Montana Energy Advisory Council on the social impact of coal development in the Decker-Birney-Ashland area.* They are included here because their description of the Decker area is useful to understanding the impact of the proposed Decker mine expansion.

*"Final Report: A Study of Social Impact of Coal Development in the Decker-Birney-Ashland Area," Community Service Program, University of Montana, Missoula, May 31, 1975.



DECKER-BIRNEY-ASHLAND AREA

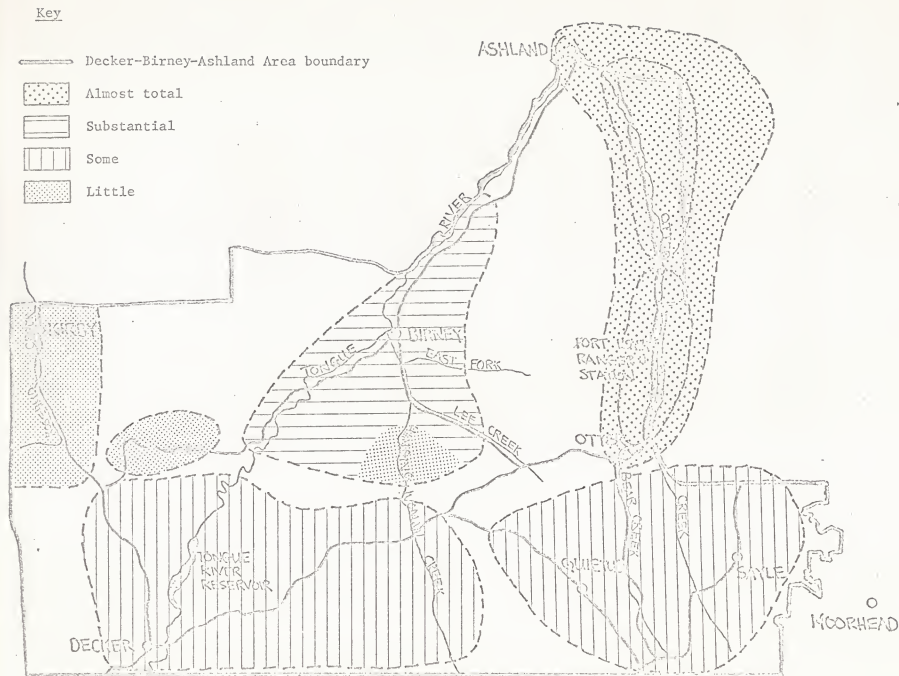
Map SI-1: Ranch Size





DECKER-BIRNEY-ASHLAND AREA

Map SI-2: Dependence on Grazing Leases or Permits








DECKER-BIRNEY-ASHLAND AREA

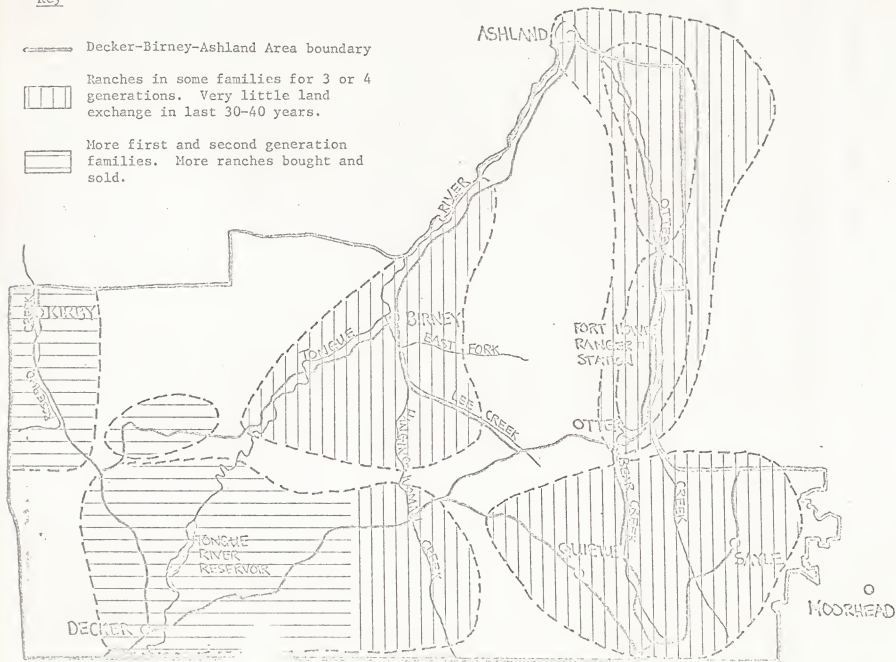
Map SI-3: Continuity of Families

Key

 Decker-Birney-Ashland Area boundary

 Ranches in some families for 3 or 4 generations. Very little land exchange in last 30-40 years.

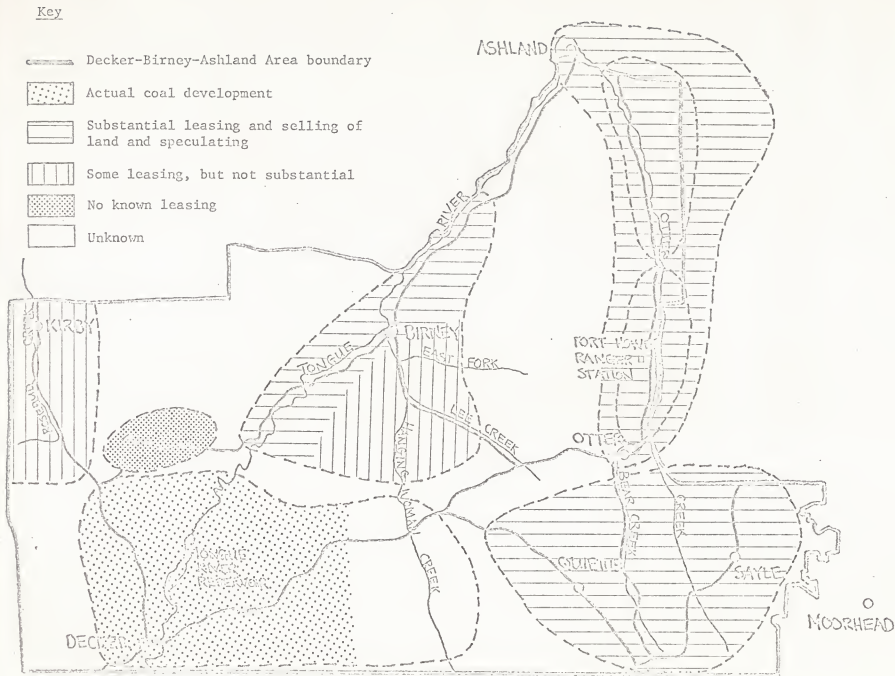
 More first and second generation families. More ranches bought and sold.





DECKER-BIRNEY-ASHLAND AREA

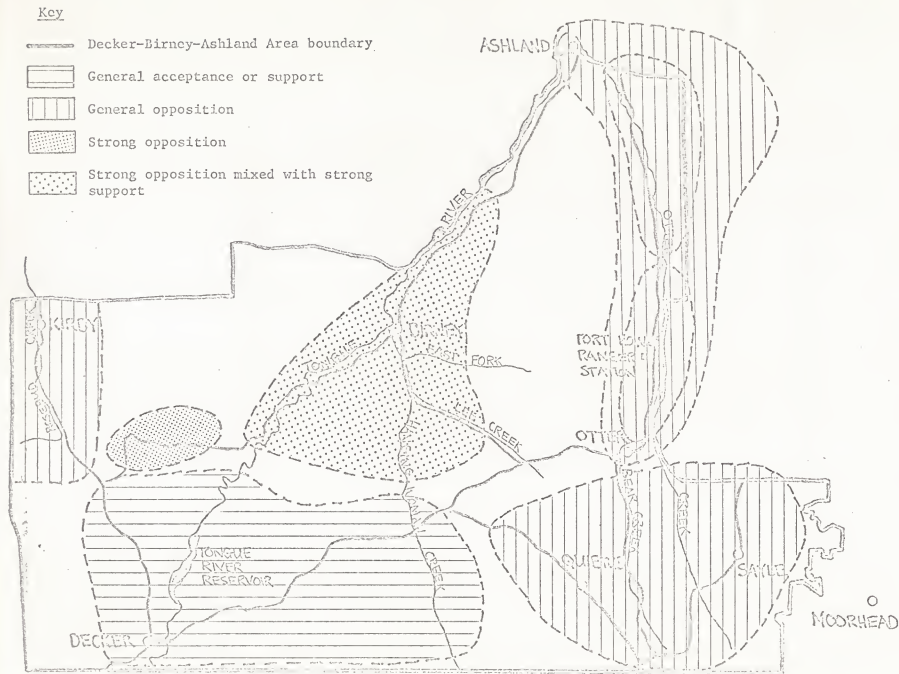
Map SI-4: Status of Coal Development





DECKER-BIRNEY-ASHLAND AREA

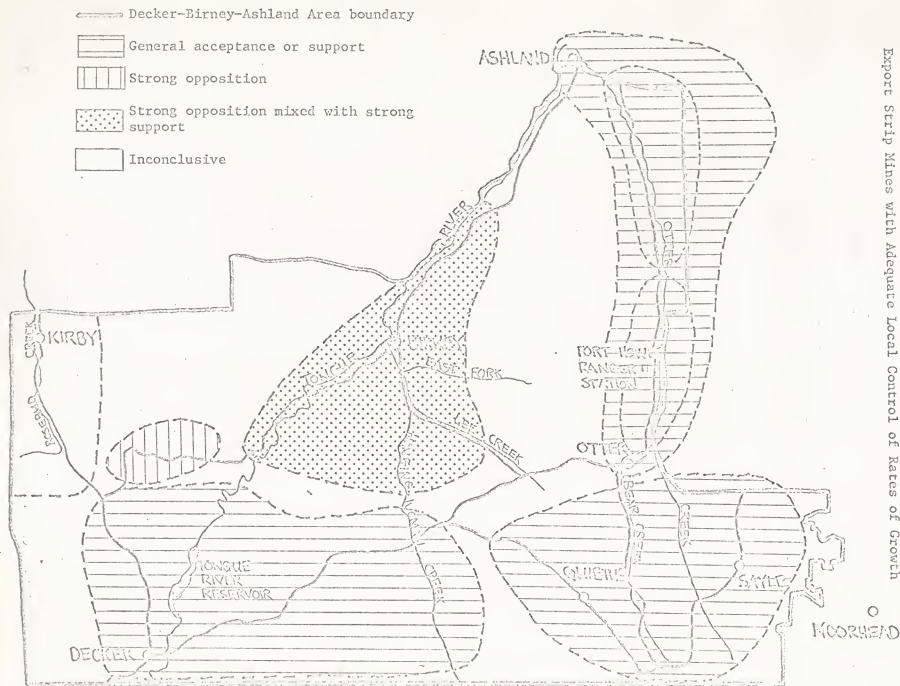
Map SI-5: Attitudes toward Coal Development





DECKER-BIRNEY-ASHLAND AREA

Map SI-6: Expected Behavior toward Coal Development, Assuming
Export Strip Mines with Adequate Local Control of Rates of Growth





Appendix SI-5: Bibliography

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